

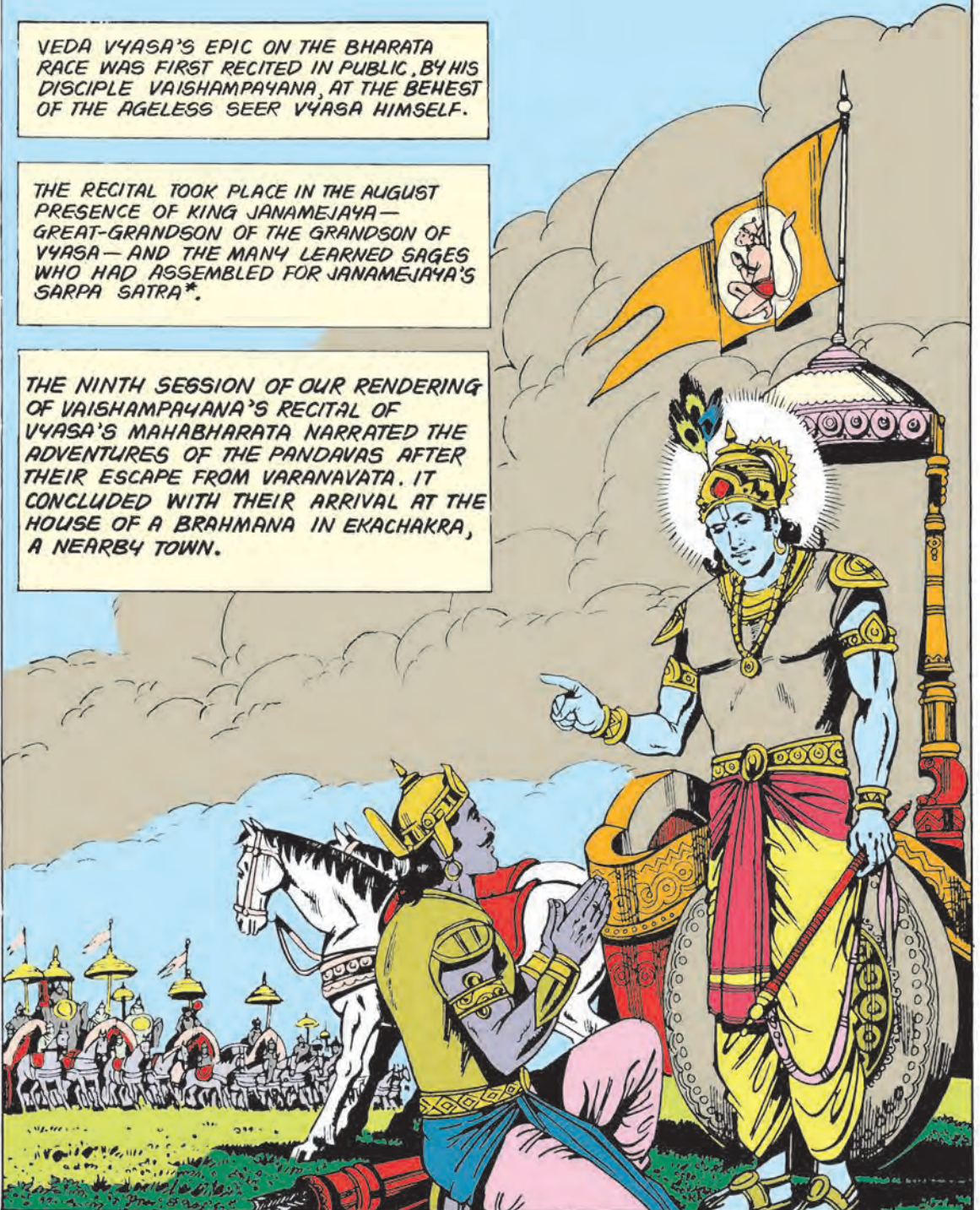
Mahabharata-10

THE PANDAVAS AT EKACHAKRA

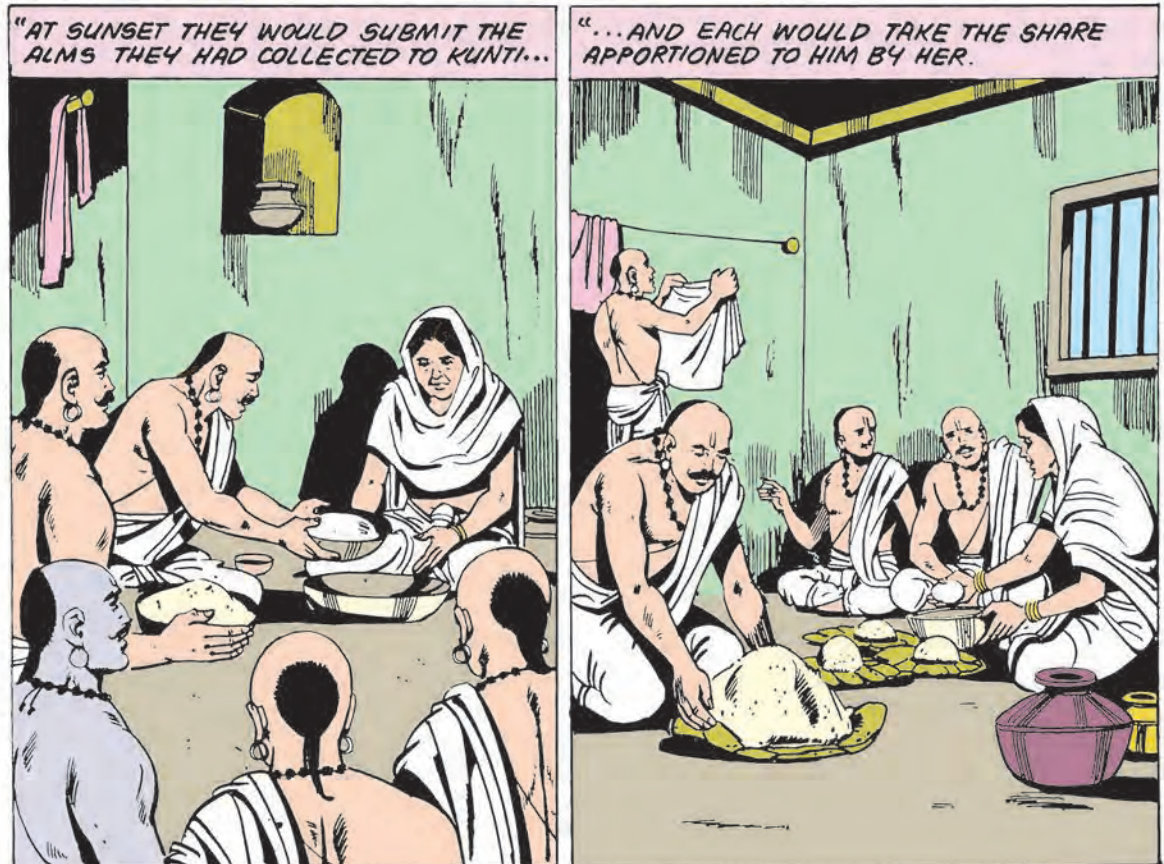
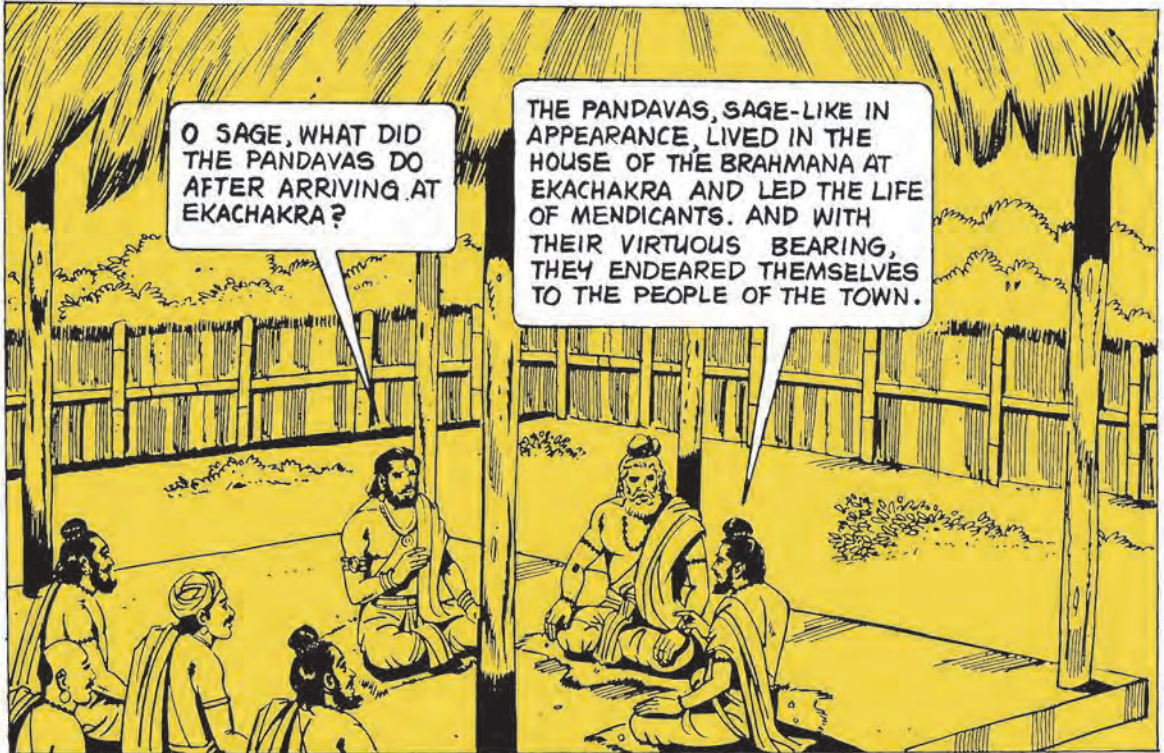
VEDA VYASA'S EPIC ON THE BHARATA RACE WAS FIRST RECITED IN PUBLIC, BY HIS DISCIPLE VAISHAMPAYANA, AT THE BEHEST OF THE AGELESS SEER VYASA HIMSELF.

THE RECITAL TOOK PLACE IN THE AUGUST PRESENCE OF KING JANAMEJAYA— GREAT-GRANDSON OF THE GRANDSON OF VYASA— AND THE MANY LEARNED SAGES WHO HAD ASSEMBLED FOR JANAMEJAYA'S SARPA SATRA*.

THE NINTH SESSION OF OUR RENDERING OF VAISHAMPAYANA'S RECITAL OF VYASA'S MAHABHARATA NARRATED THE ADVENTURES OF THE PANDAVAS AFTER THEIR ESCAPE FROM VARANAVATA. IT CONCLUDED WITH THEIR ARRIVAL AT THE HOUSE OF A BRAHMANA IN EKACHAKRA, A NEARBY TOWN.



* 12-YEAR-LONG SNAKE SACRIFICE



"WHILE ONE HALF ALWAYS WENT TO MIGHTY BHEEMA, THE OTHER WAS SHARED BY THE REST."



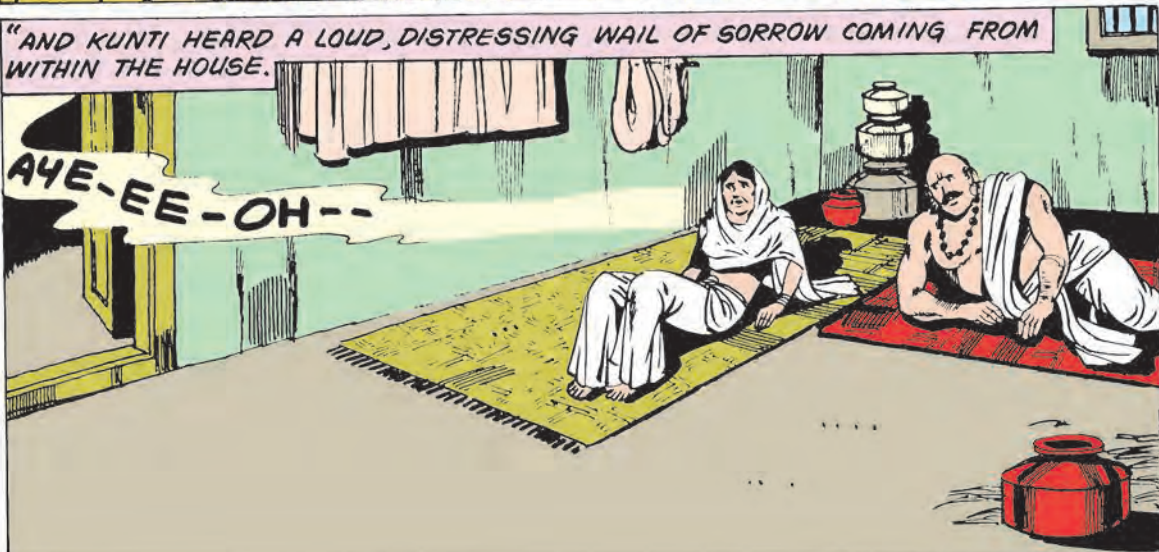
IN THIS MANNER, O MONARCH, THE PANDAVAS LIVED THERE FOR SOME TIME.

THEN ONE DAY IT SO HAPPENED THAT WHILE THE OTHERS WENT OUT SEEKING ALMS, BHEEMA STAYED AT HOME WITH KUNTI.

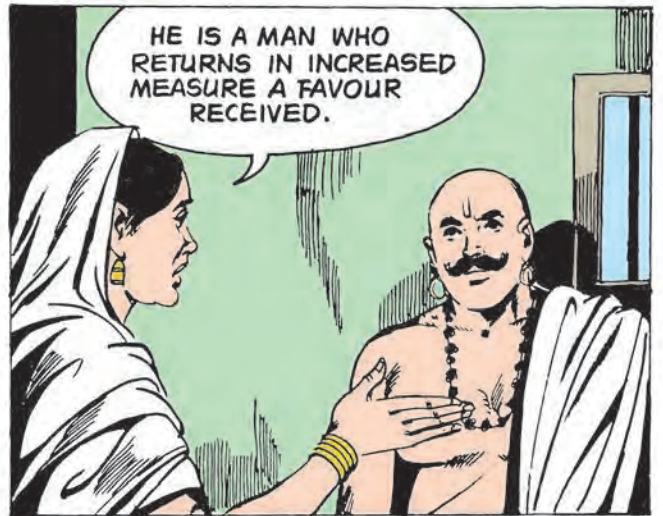
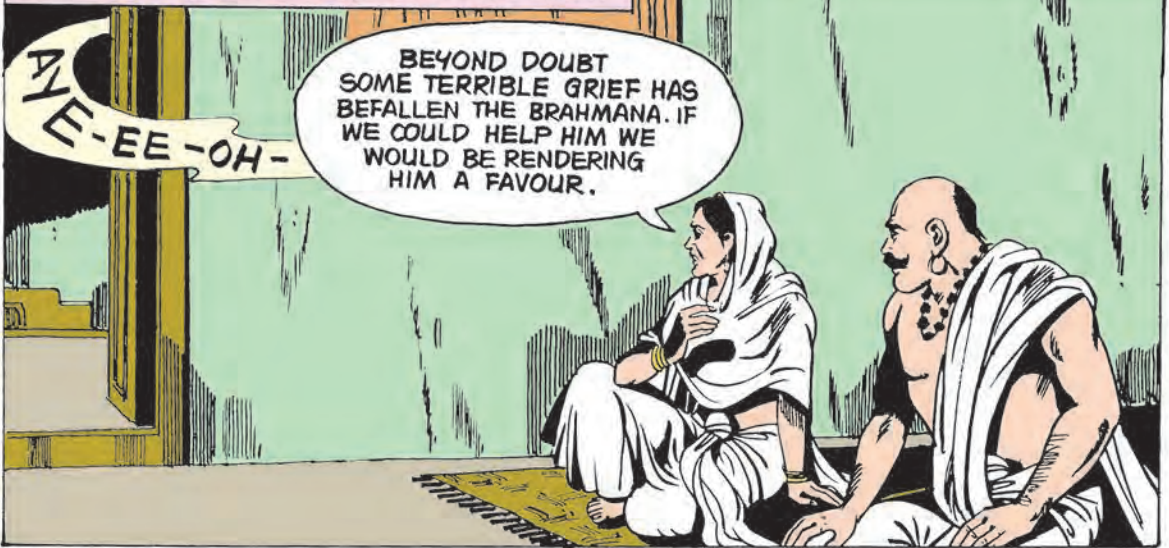


"AND KUNTI HEARD A LOUD, DISTRESSING WAIL OF SORROW COMING FROM WITHIN THE HOUSE."

AHE-EE-OH--



"THEN KUNTI, O MONARCH, SAID TO BHEEMA:



" THEN BHEEMA SAID: -

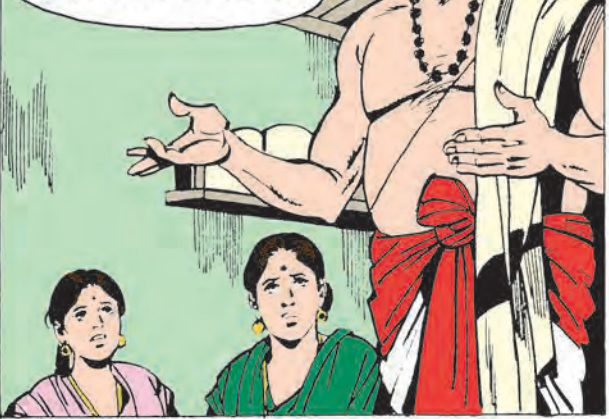


"THEN KUNTI ENTERED THE INNER CHAMBER OF THE HOUSE AND BEHELD THE BRAHMANA SITTING DOWNCAST WITH HIS WIFE AND DAUGHTER AND SON BESIDE HIM.

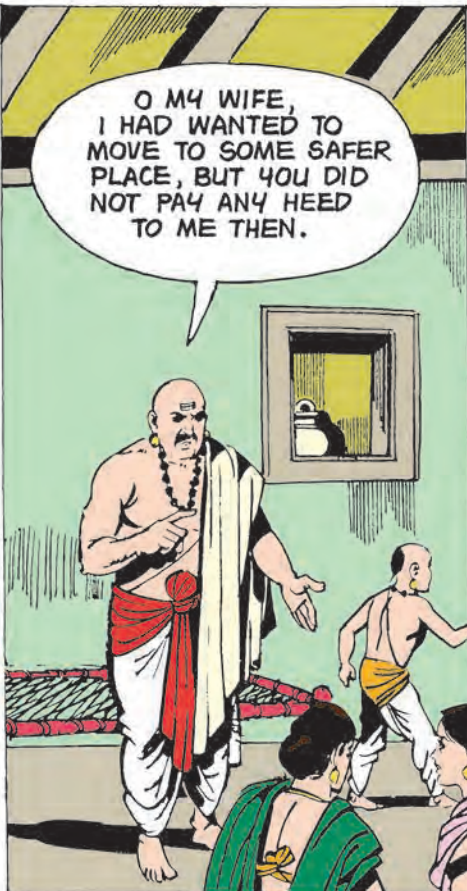


"AND SHE HEARD HIM SAY:

FIE ON THIS
WORLDLY LIFE WHICH
IS HOLLOW AND FUTILE;
WHICH IS ROOTED IN
PAIN AND HELD IN
CHAINS; WHICH METES
OUT ONLY MISERY.

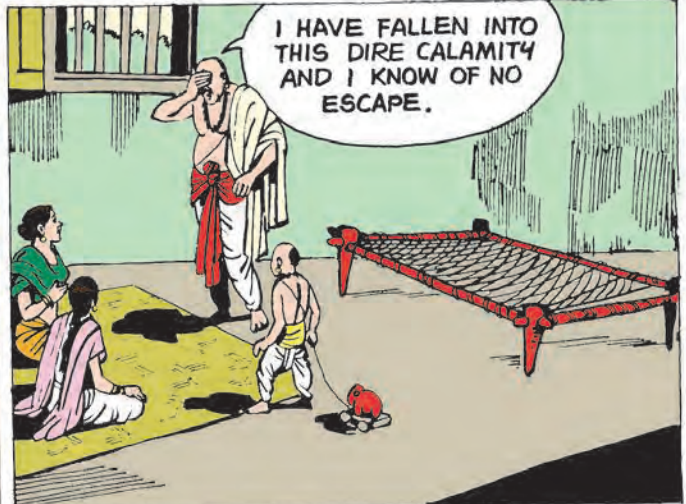
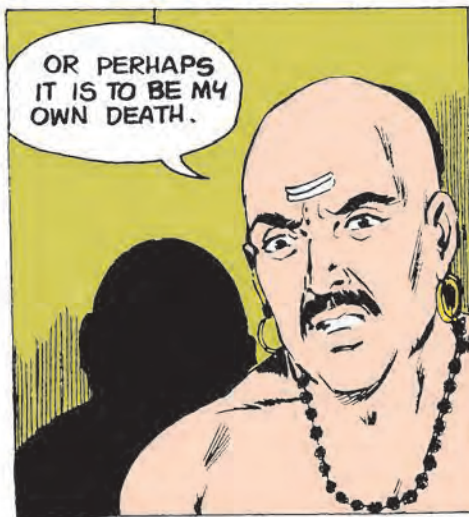


O MY WIFE,
I HAD WANTED TO
MOVE TO SOME SAFER
PLACE, BUT YOU DID
NOT PAY ANY HEED
TO ME THEN.

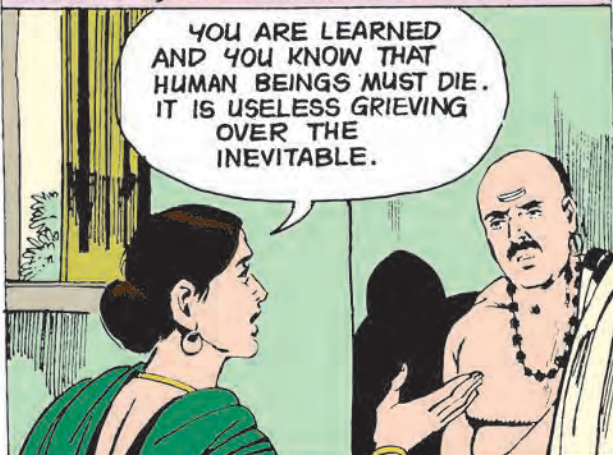


YOU TURNED DOWN MY
FREQUENT REQUESTS SAYING:
I WAS BORN HERE AND I GREW UP
HERE AND SO DID MY FATHER. LOVE FOR
YOUR KIN TURNED YOU DEAF
TO MY WORDS.

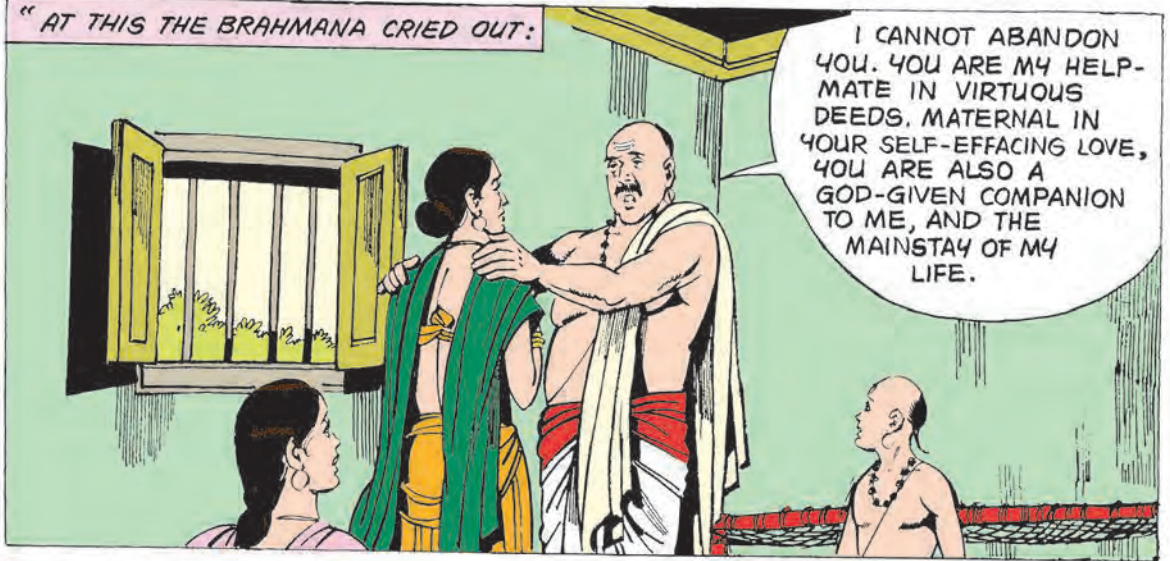




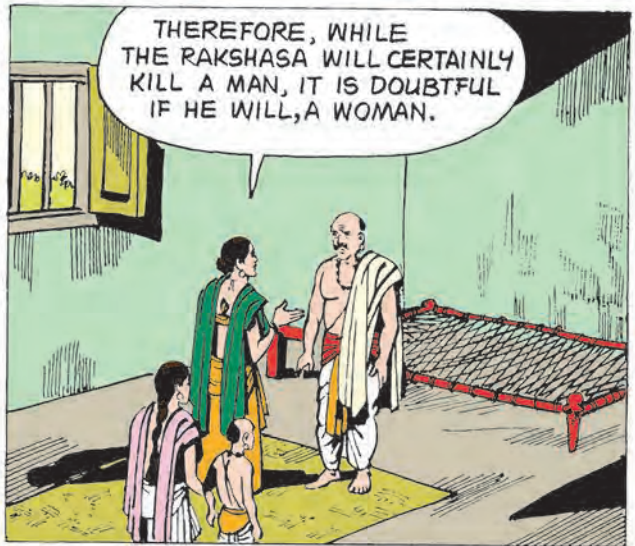
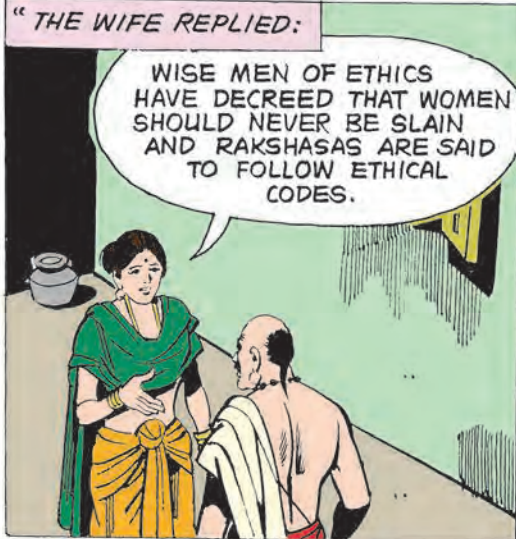
"ON HEARING THESE WORDS OF THE BRAHMANA, O MONARCH, HIS WIFE SAID:



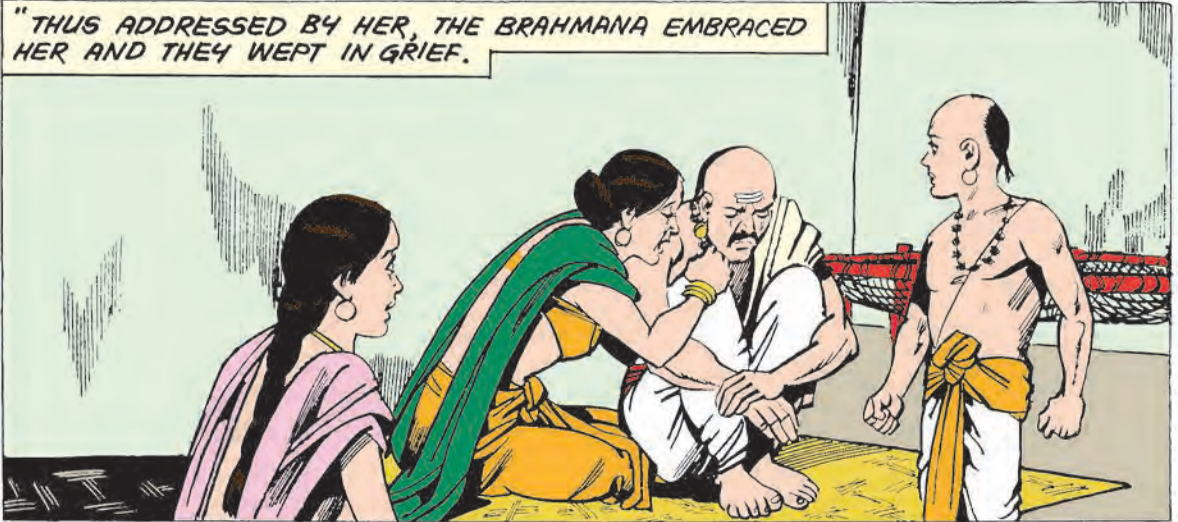
"AT THIS THE BRAHMANA CRIED OUT:



"THE WIFE REPLIED:

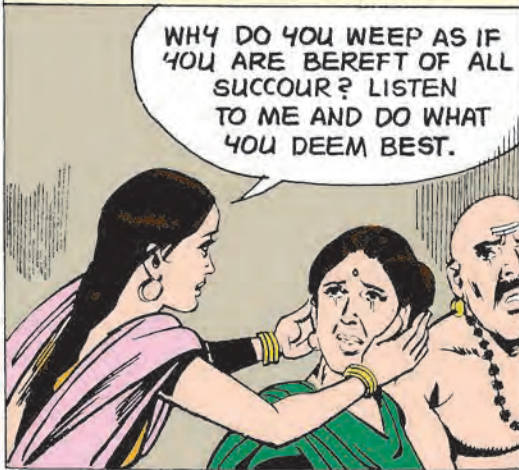


"THUS ADDRESSED BY HER, THE BRAHMANA EMBRACED HER AND THEY WEPT IN GRIEF."

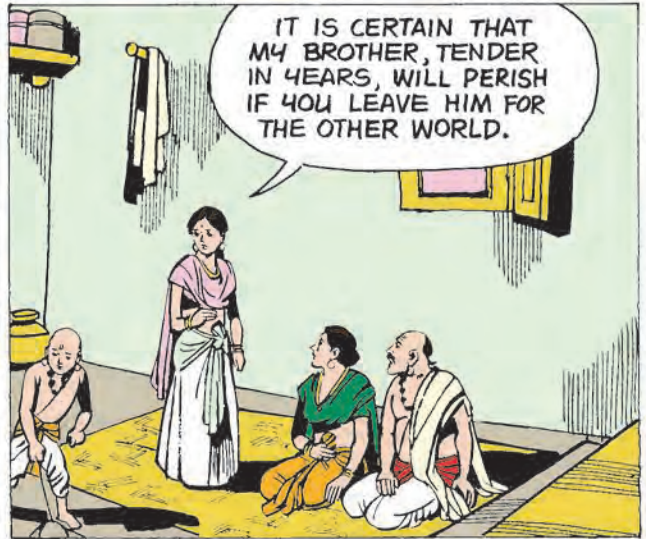


"SADDENED BY THE GRIEF OF HER PARENTS, THE DAUGHTER SAID:

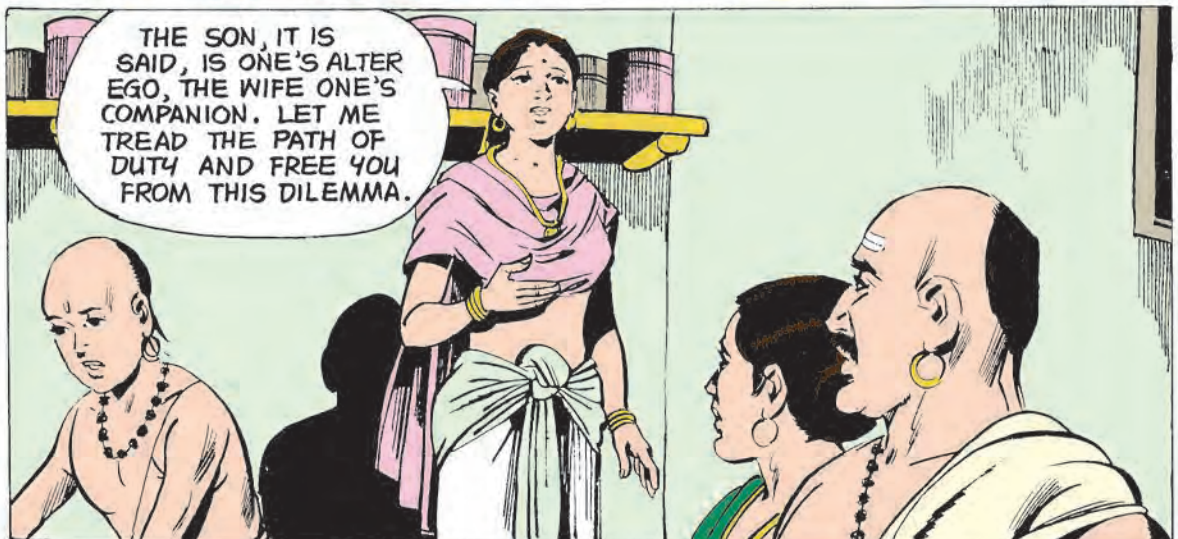
WHY DO YOU WEEP AS IF YOU ARE BEREFT OF ALL SUCCOUR? LISTEN TO ME AND DO WHAT YOU DEEM BEST.



IT IS CERTAIN THAT MY BROTHER, TENDER IN YEARS, WILL PERISH IF YOU LEAVE HIM FOR THE OTHER WORLD.

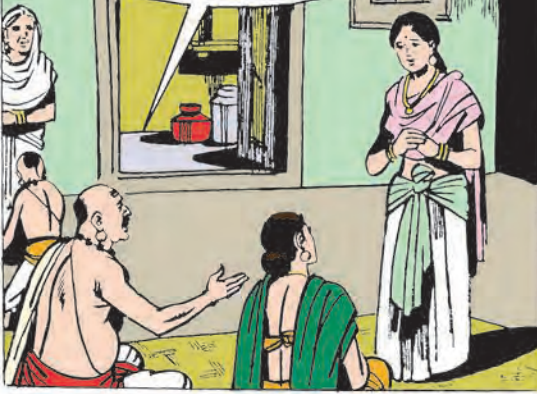


THE SON, IT IS SAID, IS ONE'S ALTER EGO, THE WIFE ONE'S COMPANION. LET ME TREAD THE PATH OF DUTY AND FREE YOU FROM THIS DILEMMA.



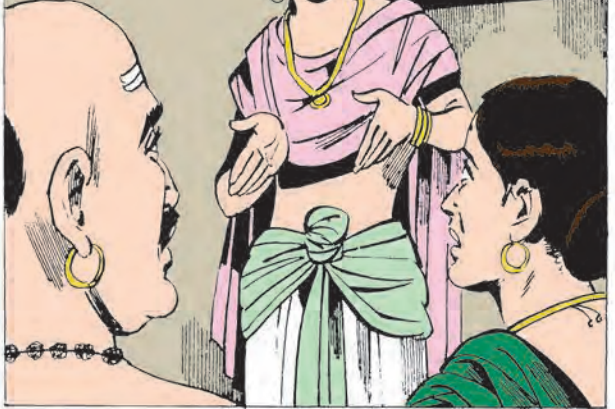
" THEN THE BRAHMANA SAID:

HOW CAN I ABANDON
MY INNOCENT DAUGHTER,
WHO IS CERTAIN TO
BRING ME COMFORT
AND DESCENDANTS,
AND THROUGH THEM
SALVATION ?

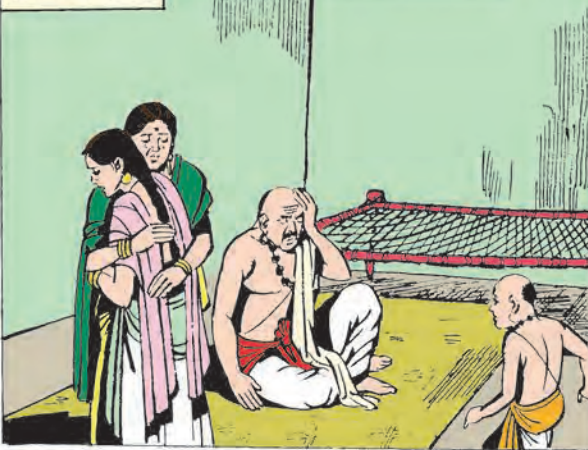


" THE DAUGHTER REPLIED:

YOU HAVE TO
GIVE ME AWAY ONE
DAY OR OTHER. GIVE
ME UP NOW.

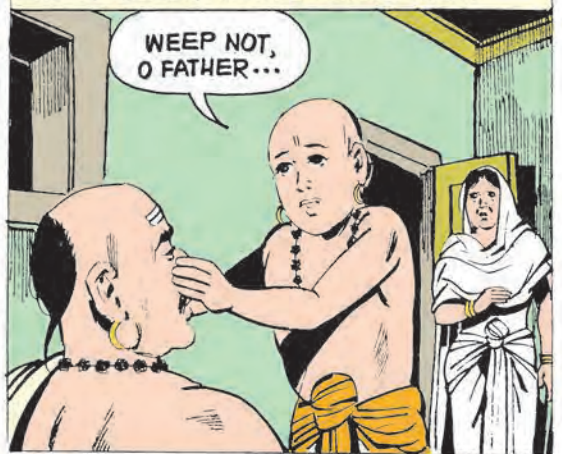


"AND THEN ALL THE THREE WEPT
BITTERLY.

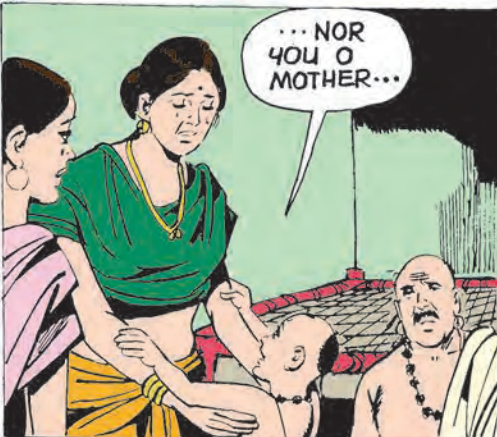


"THEIR SON BEHOLDING THIS LISPED
THESE WORDS IN HIS SWEET WAY:

WEEP NOT,
O FATHER...



... NOR
YOU O
MOTHER...



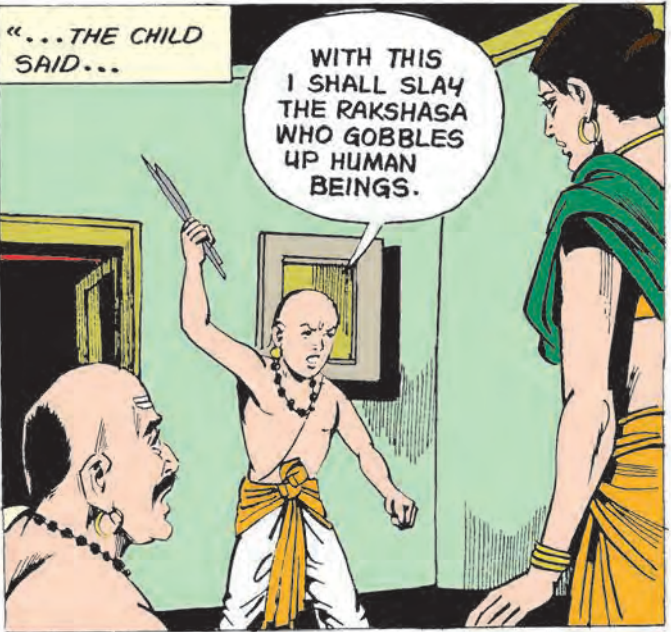
... NOR
YOU, O
SISTER.



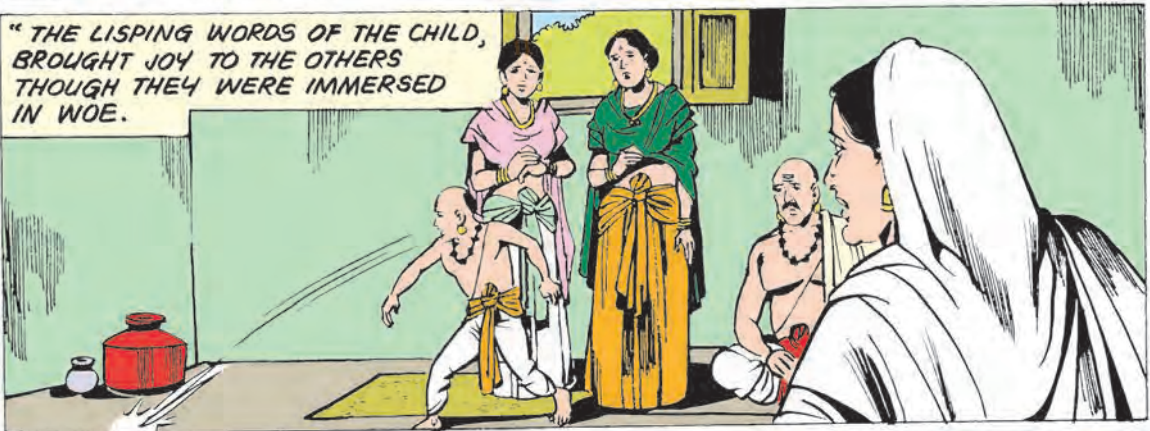
"THEN PICKING UP A BLADE OF GRASS..."



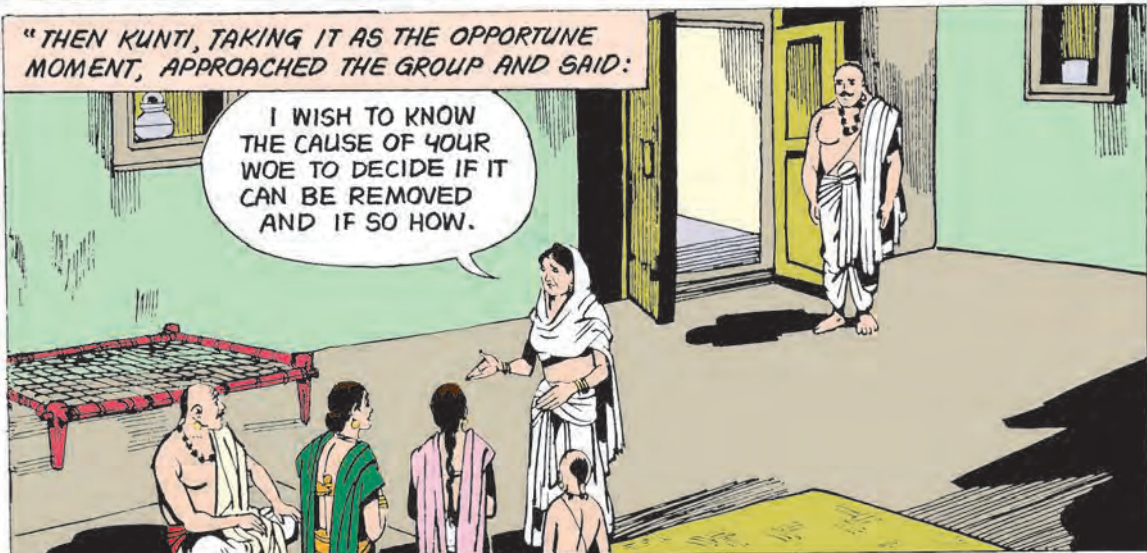
"...THE CHILD SAID..."

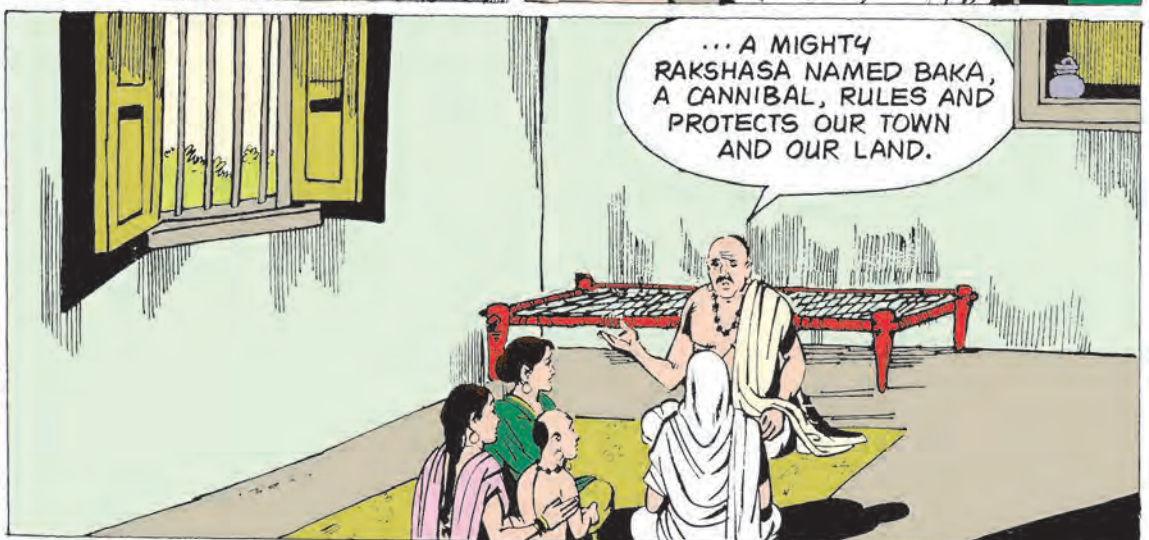
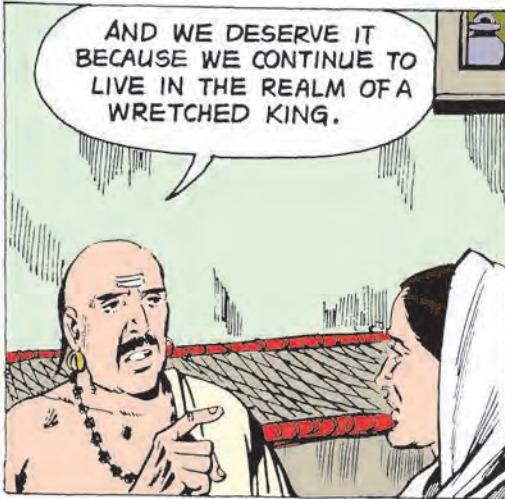
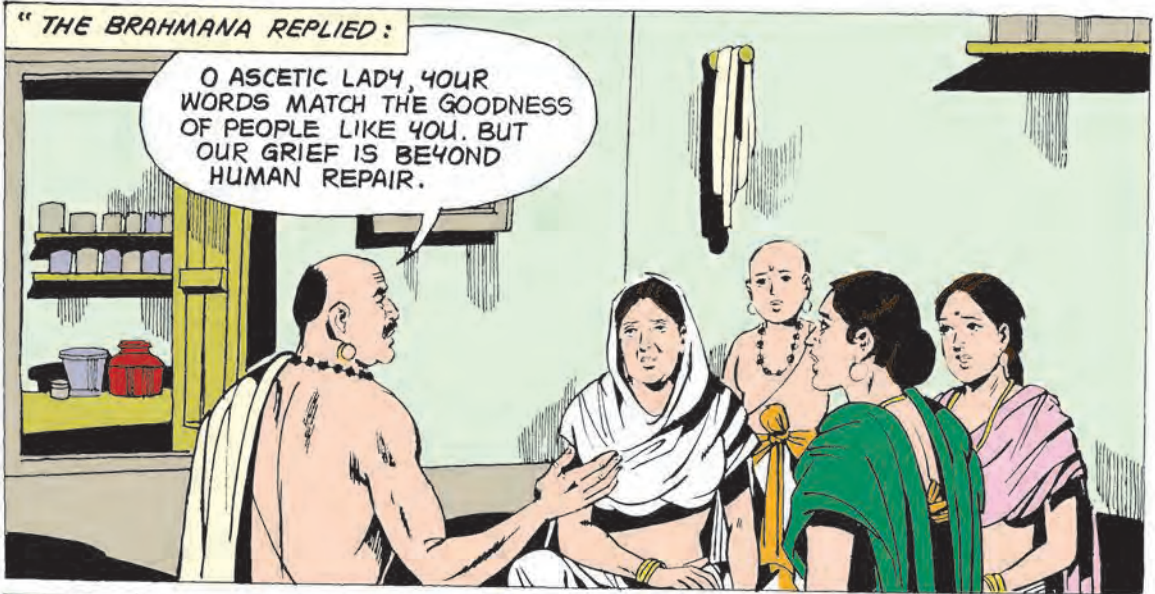


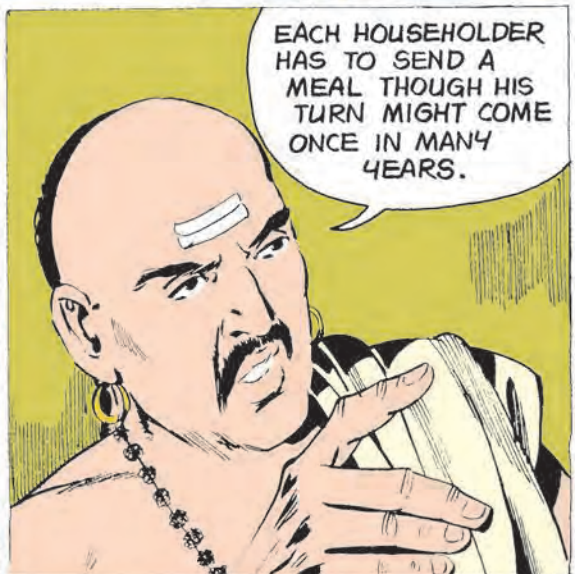
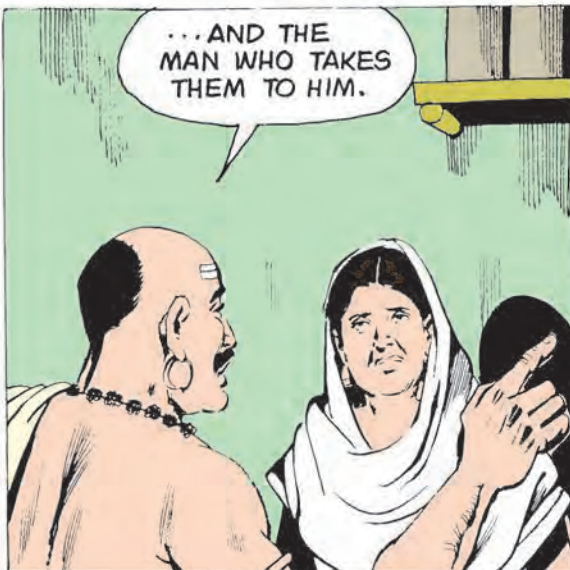
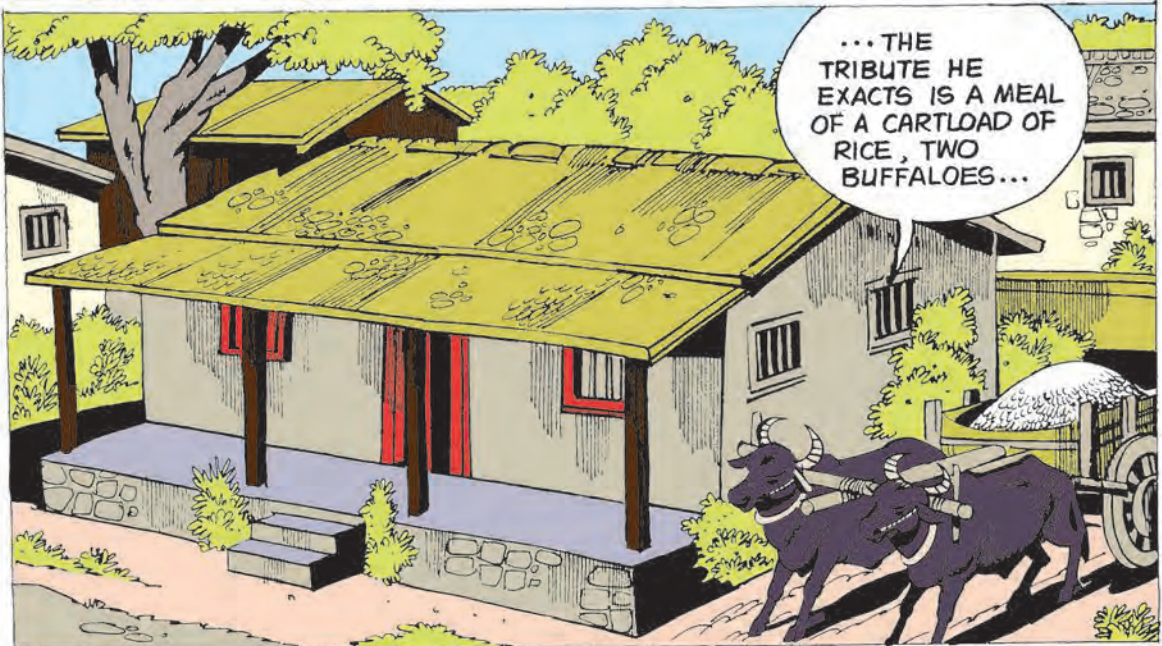
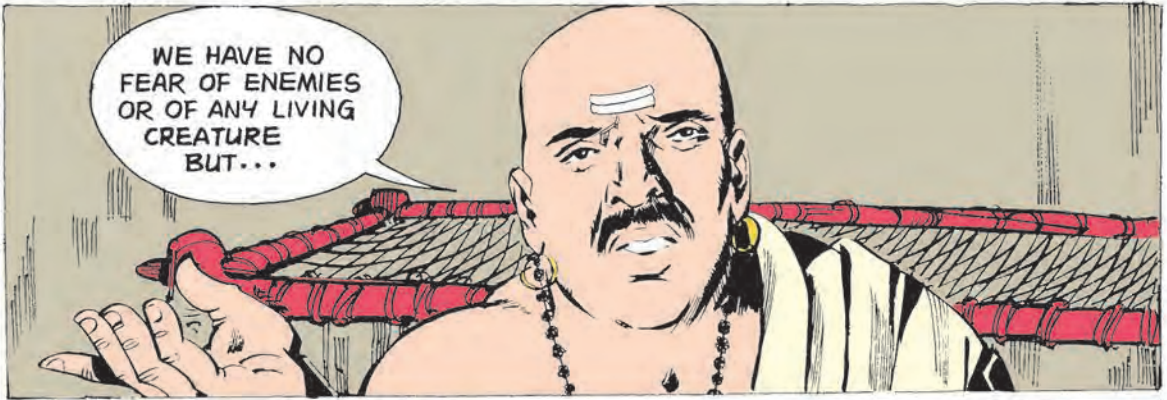
"THE LISPING WORDS OF THE CHILD, BROUGHT JOY TO THE OTHERS THOUGH THEY WERE IMMersed IN WOE."



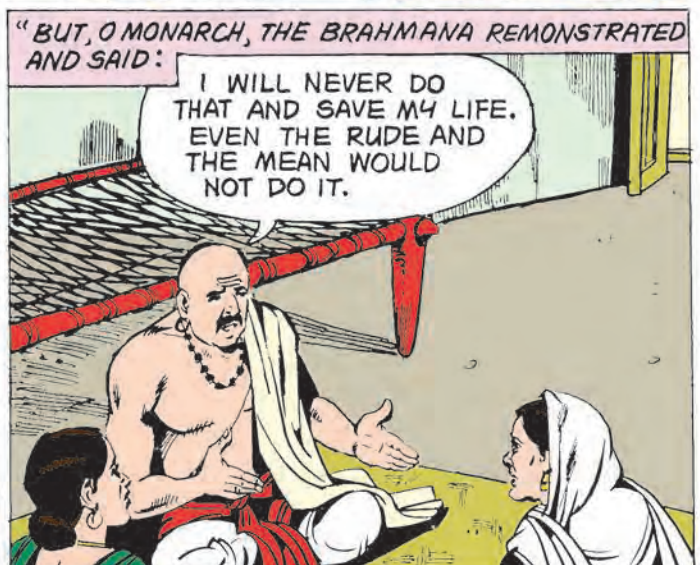
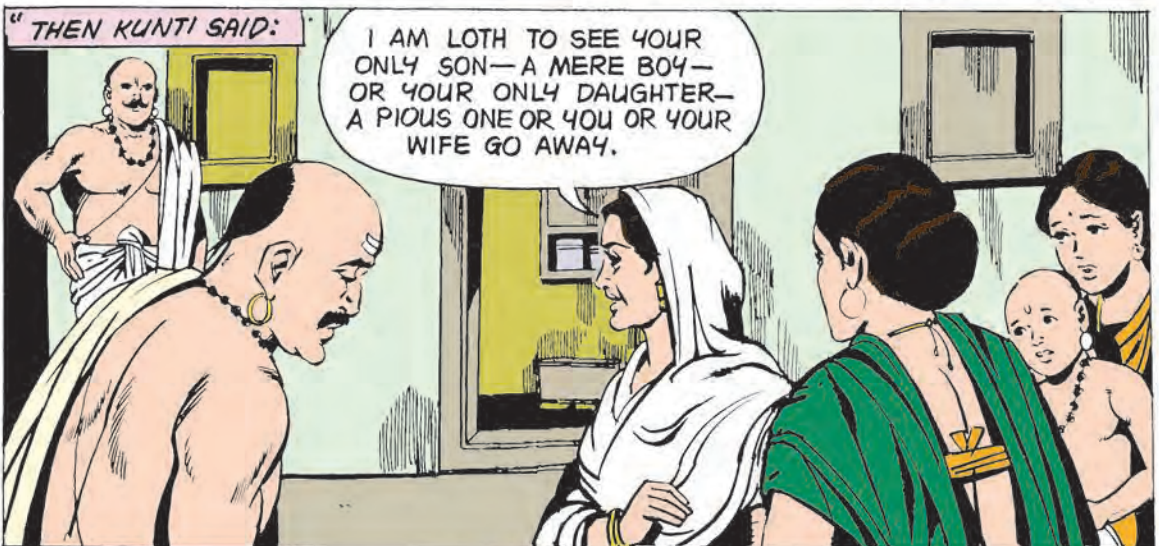
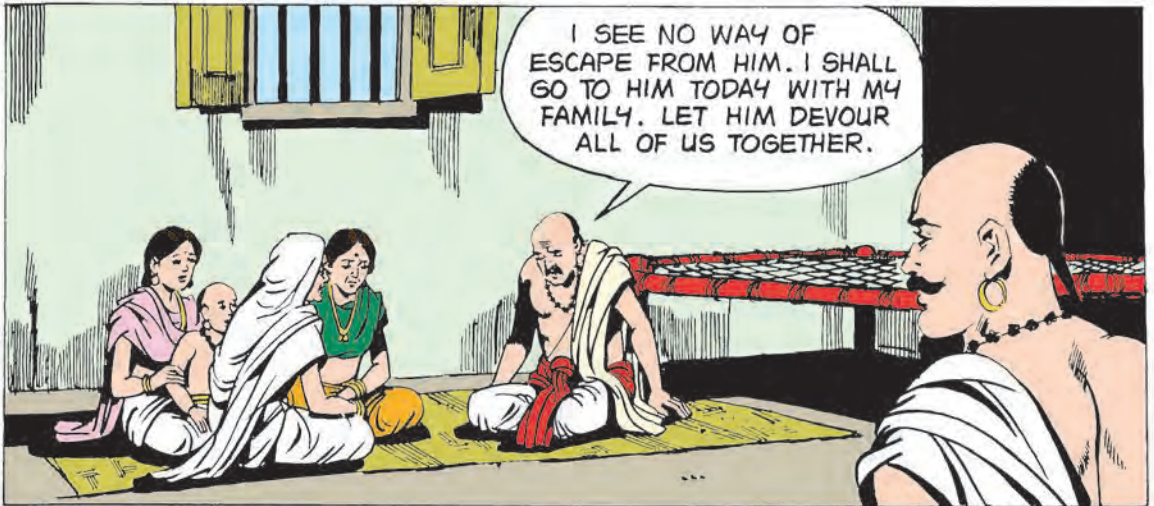
"THEN KUNTI, TAKING IT AS THE OPPORTUNE MOMENT, APPROACHED THE GROUP AND SAID:"

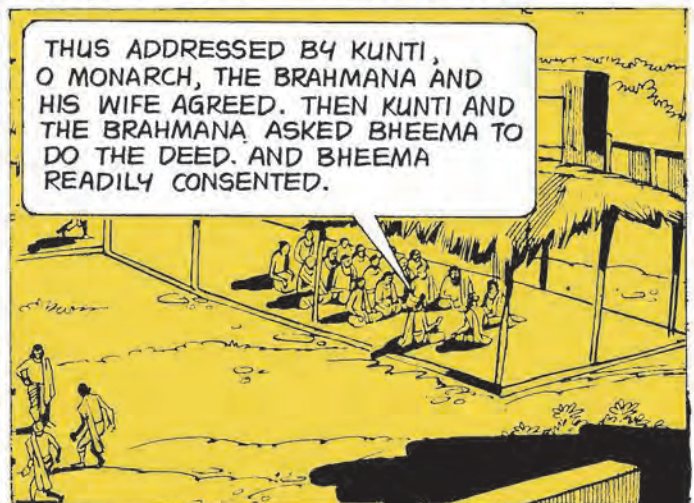
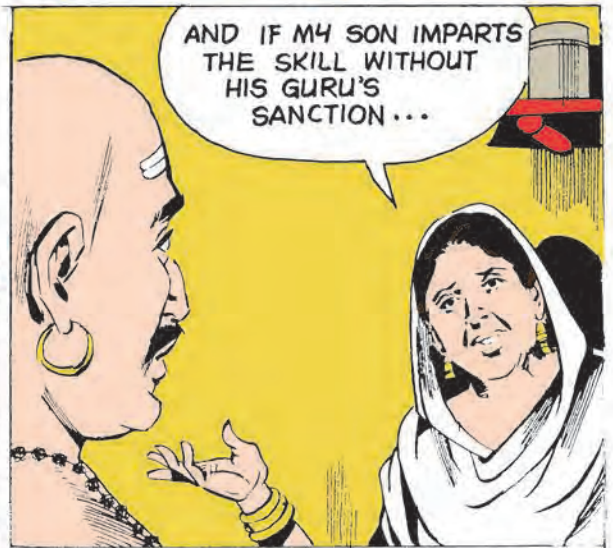
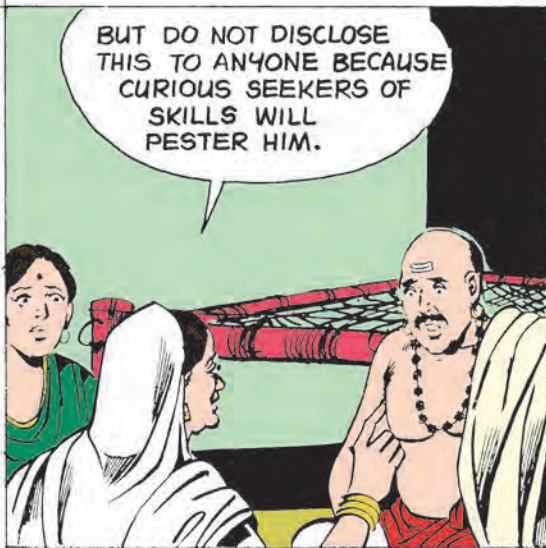
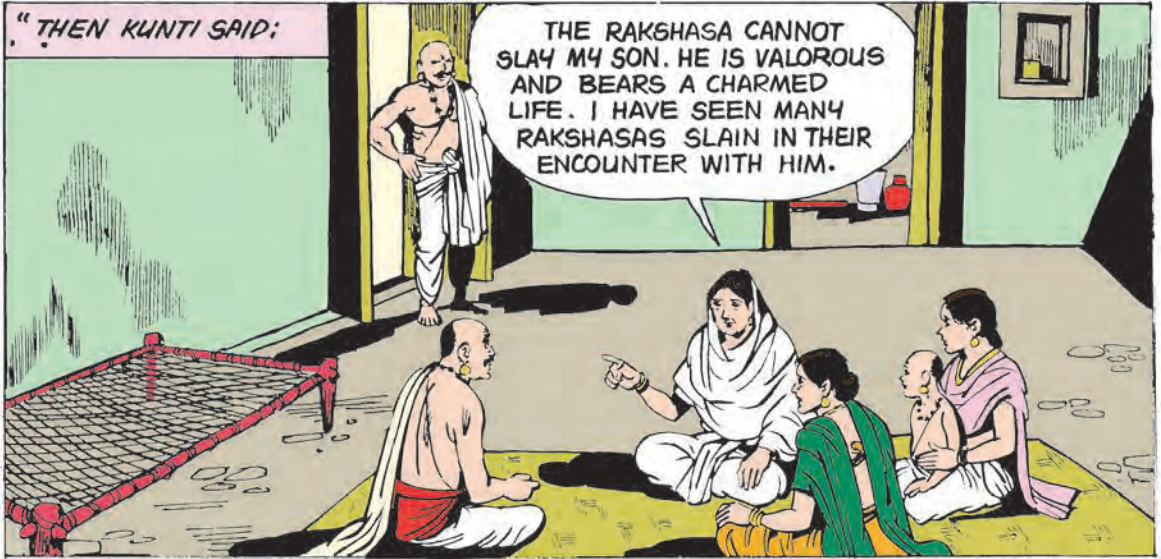




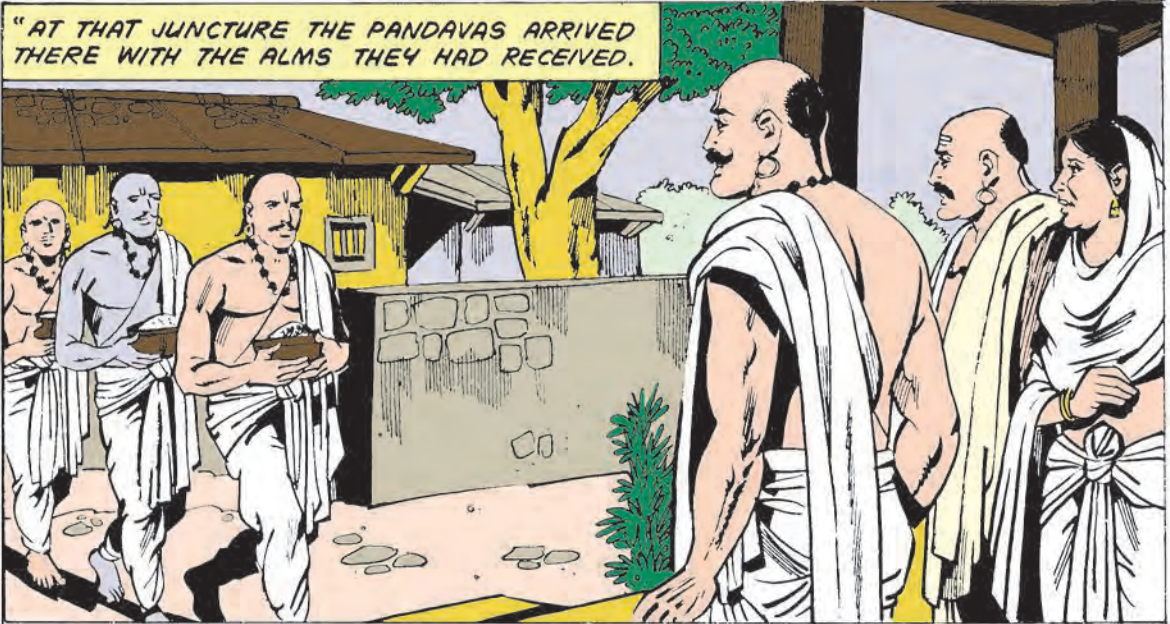




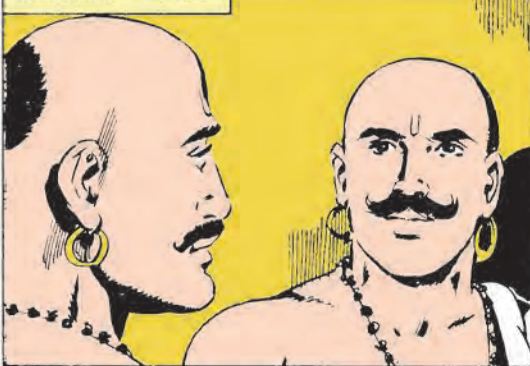




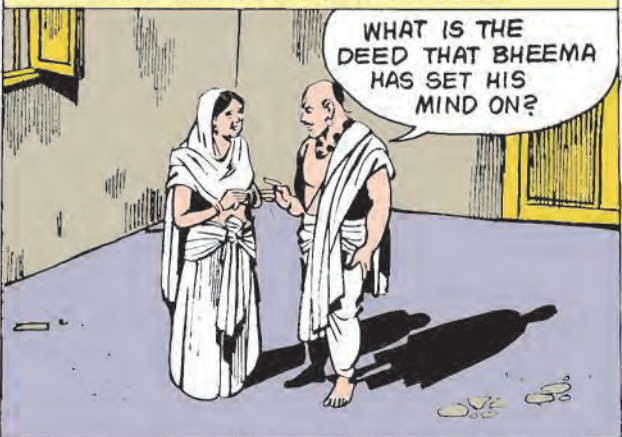
"AT THAT JUNCTURE THE PANDAVAS ARRIVED THERE WITH THE ALMS THEY HAD RECEIVED."



"AND FROM BHEEMA'S LOOK ALONE, YUDHISHTHIRA KNEW THAT HE WAS ABOUT TO PERFORM SOME MIGHTY DEED."



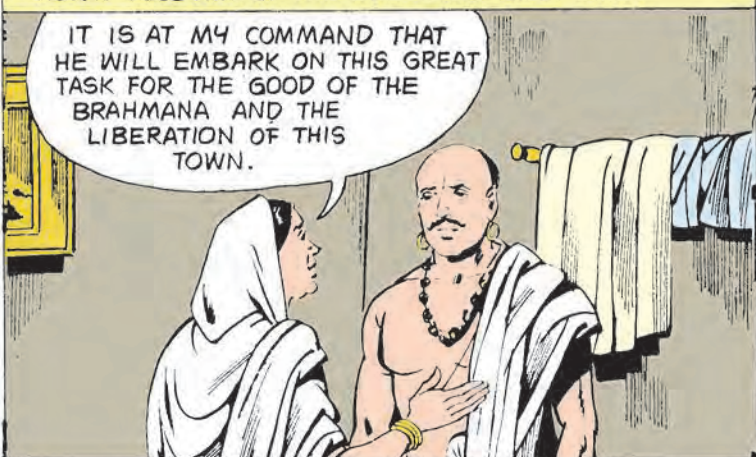
"HE ASKED HIS MOTHER IN PRIVATE:



IS IT AT YOUR COMMAND OR OF HIS OWN ACCORD?



"KUNTI TOLD HIM OF THE DEED AND THEN SAID:

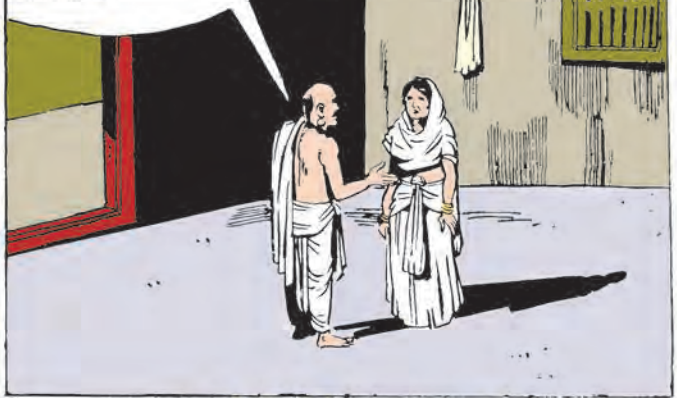


"YUDHISHTHIRA SAID:

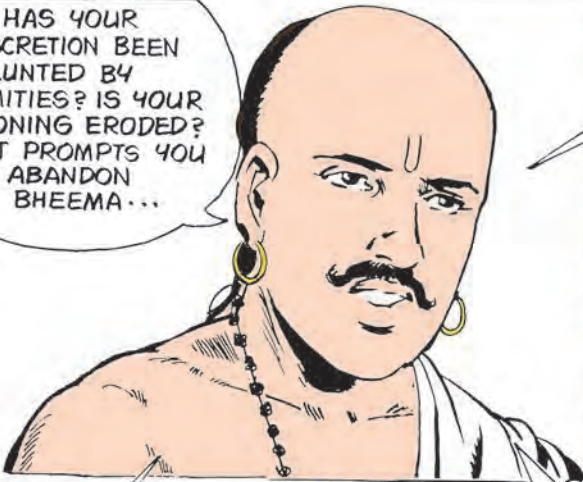
O MOTHER,
ABANDONING ONE'S
SON DOES NOT
CARRY THE
SANCTION OF THE
WISE.



BY SACRIFICING
YOUR CHILD FOR
ANOTHER'S, YOU HAVE
ACTED AGAINST THE
PRECEPTS OF THE
VEDAS AND THE
PRACTICE OF THE
WORLD.



HAS YOUR
DISCRETION BEEN
BLUNTED BY
CALAMITIES? IS YOUR
REASONING ERODED?
WHAT PROMPTS YOU
TO ABANDON
BHEEMA...



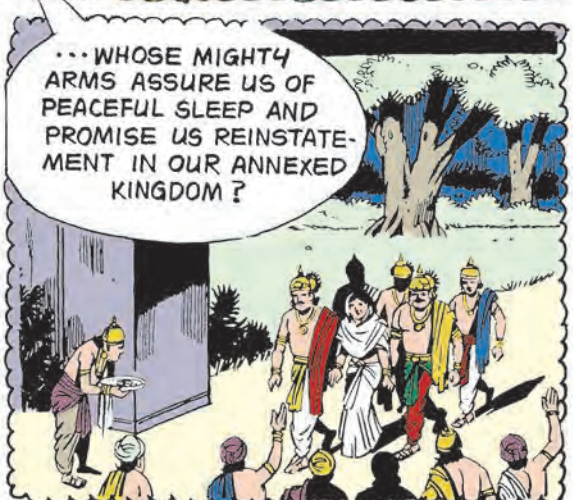
... WHOSE
OVERPOWERING
VALOUR EVER DRAINED
THE TERRIFIED
DURYODHANA AND
SHAKUNI OF THEIR
SLEEP...

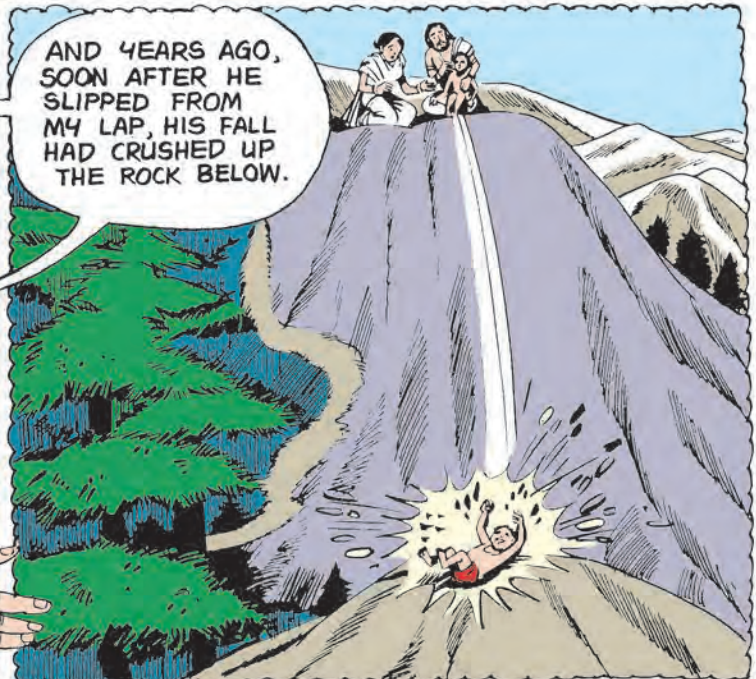
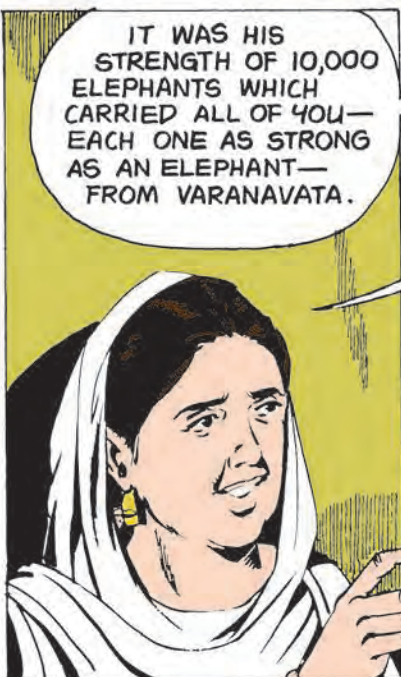
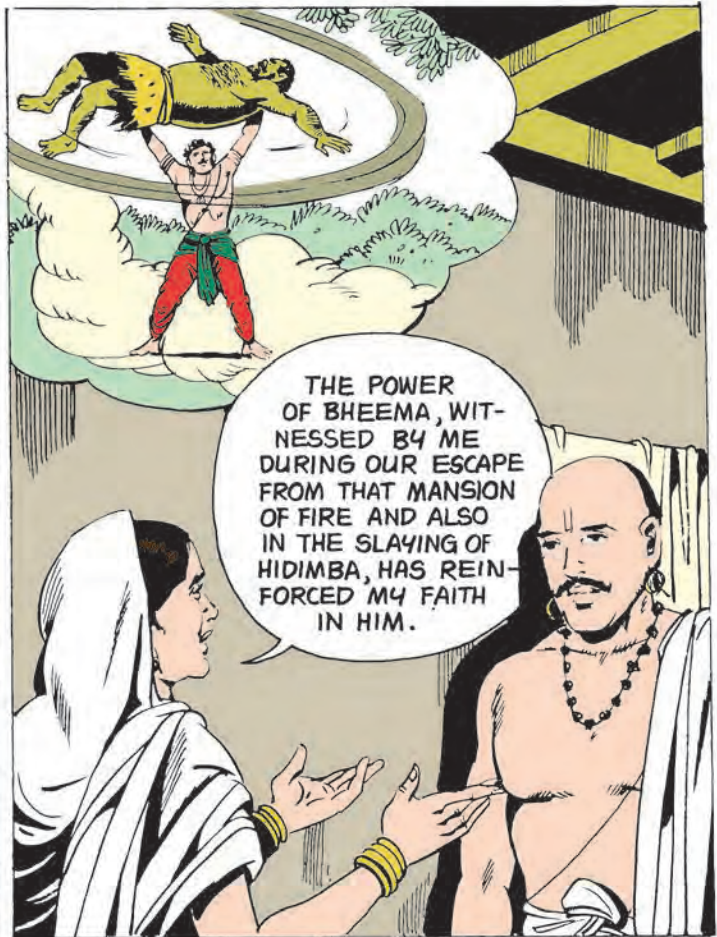
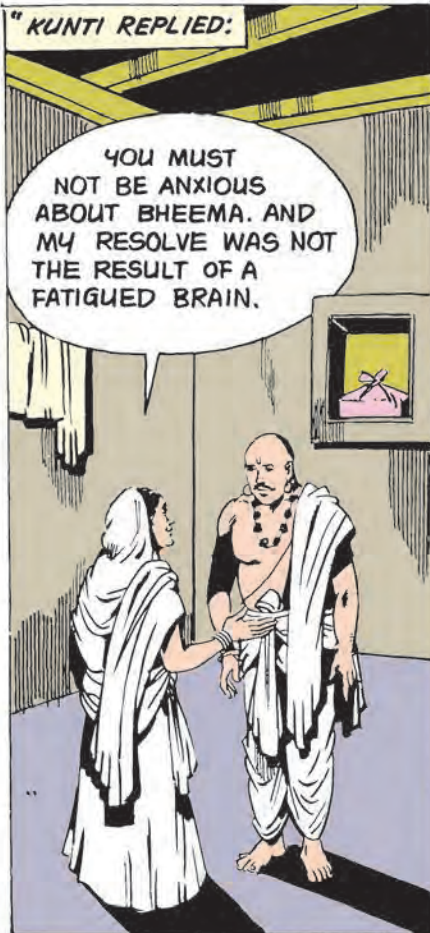


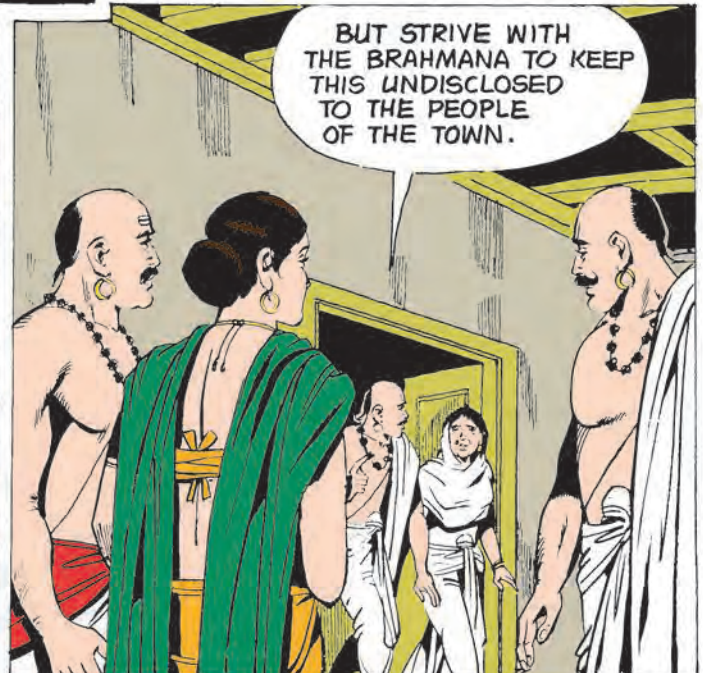
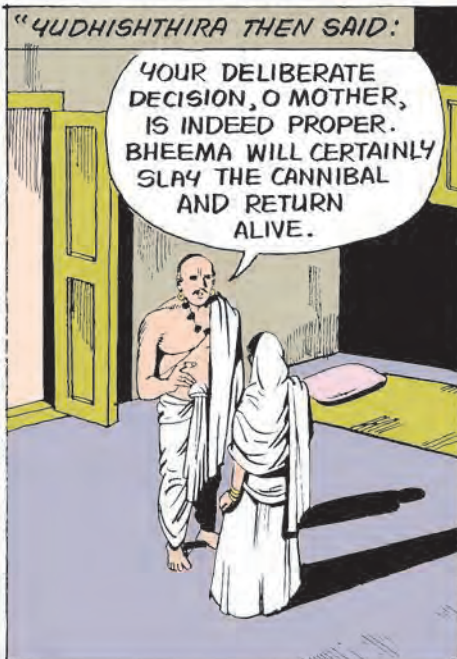
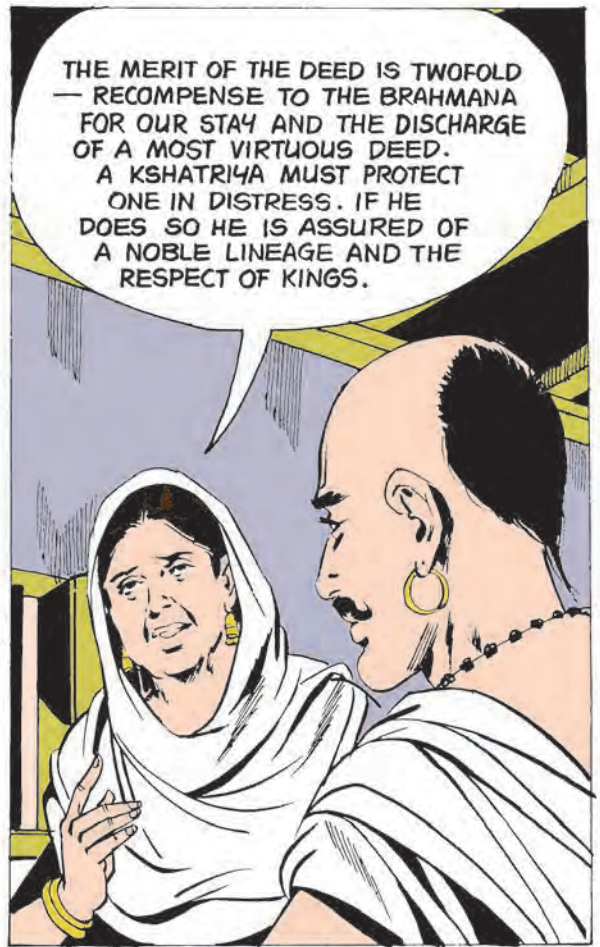
...AND
RESCUED US
FROM THE
MANSION OF
FIRE...



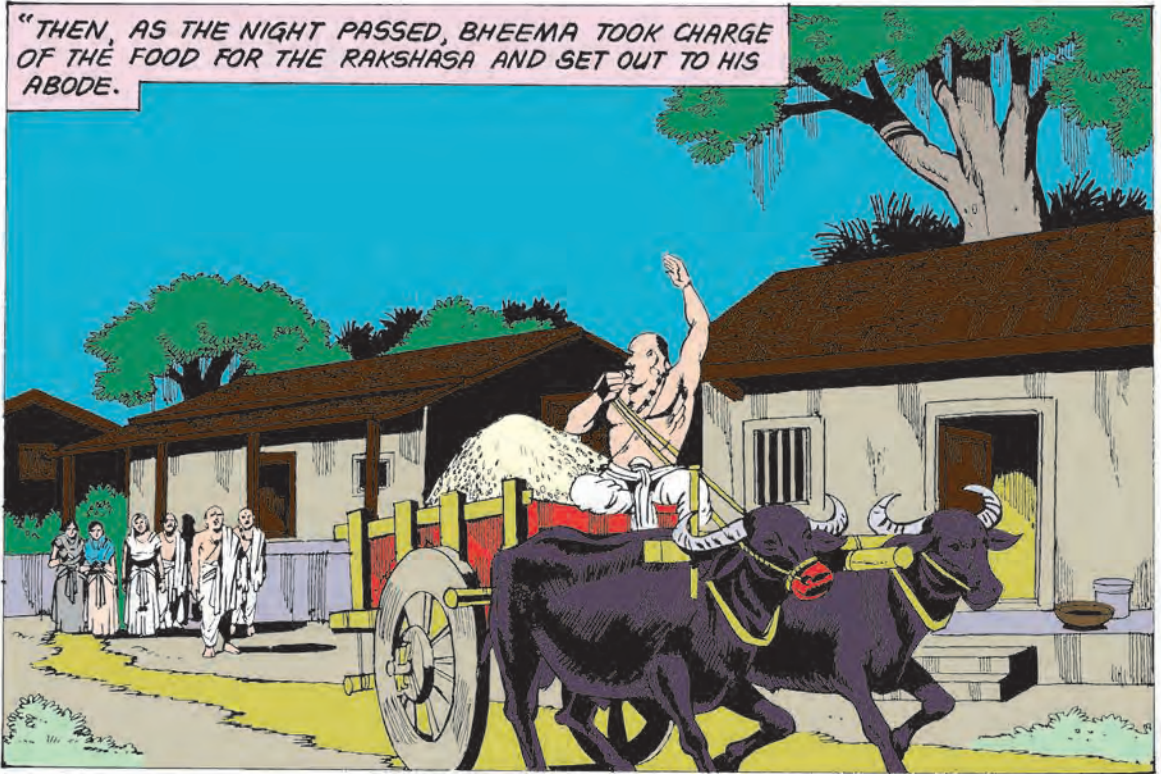
... WHOSE MIGHTY
ARMS ASSURE US OF
PEACEFUL SLEEP AND
PROMISE US REINSTATE-
MENT IN OUR ANNEXED
KINGDOM?



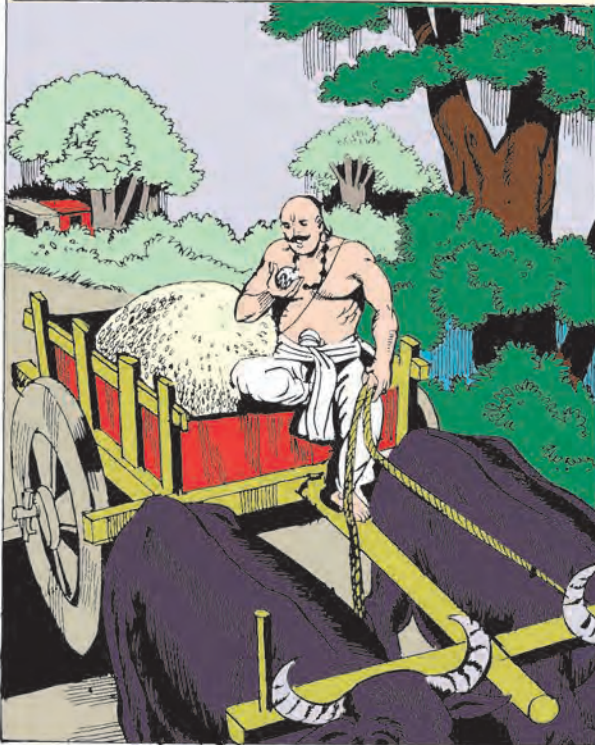




"THEN, AS THE NIGHT PASSED, BHEEMA TOOK CHARGE OF THE FOOD FOR THE RAKSHASA AND SET OUT TO HIS ABODE."

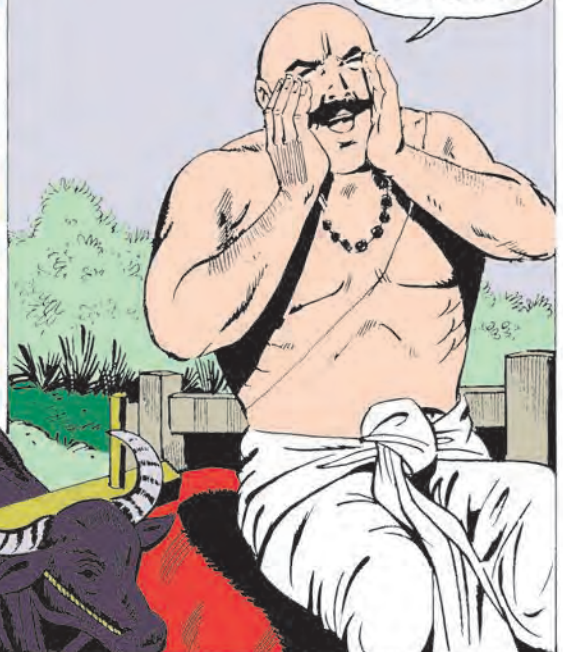


"THE POWERFUL SON OF PANDU THEN ENTERED THE FOREST OF THE RAKSHASA, HELPING HIMSELF TO THE FOOD..."



"... AND CALLING OUT:

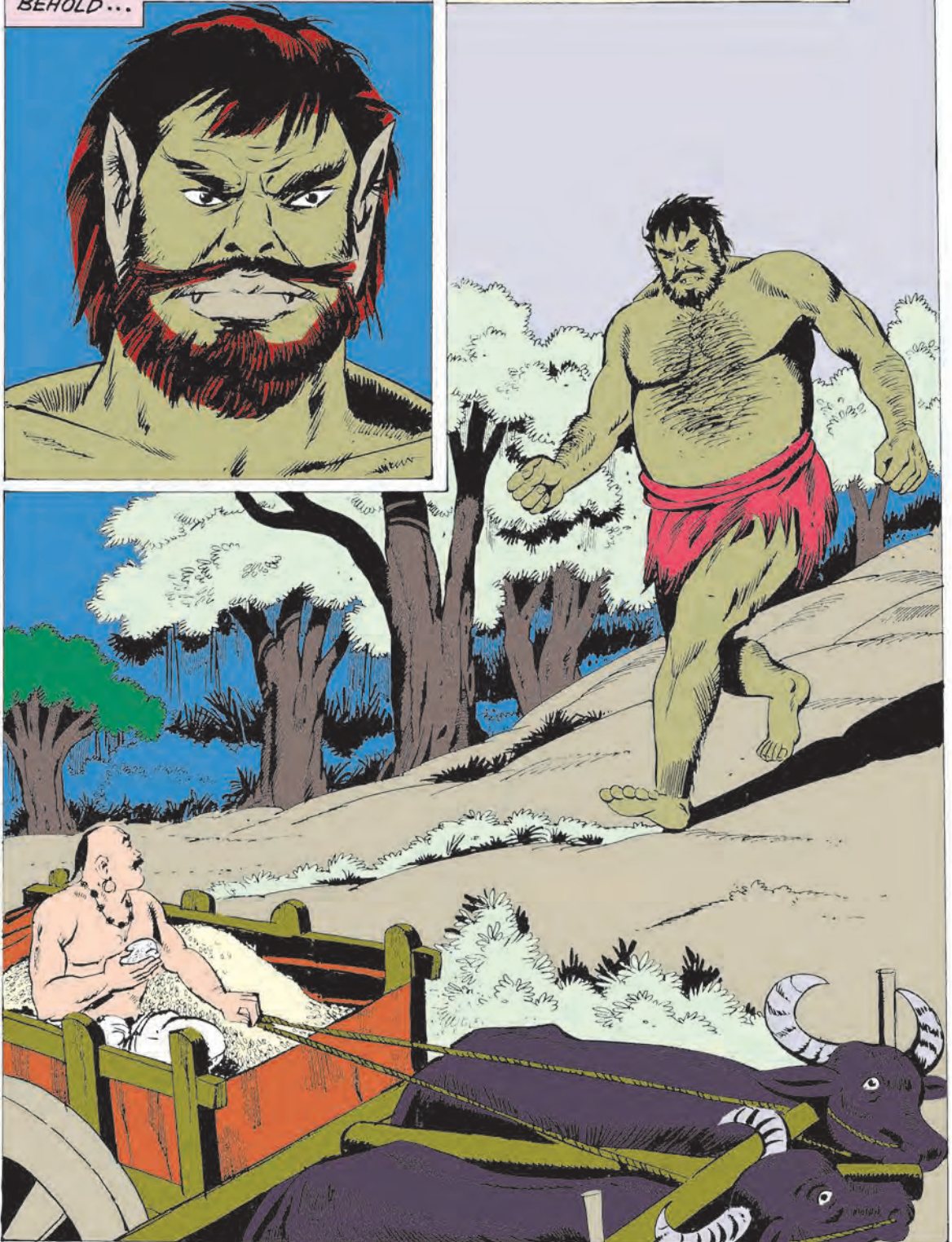
BAKA—
O BAKA—
BAKA-A—



"IMMENSE IN SIZE AND STRENGTH, RED ALL ALIKE IN EYES, HAIR AND BEARD, BAKA WAS FEARSOME TO BEHOLD..."

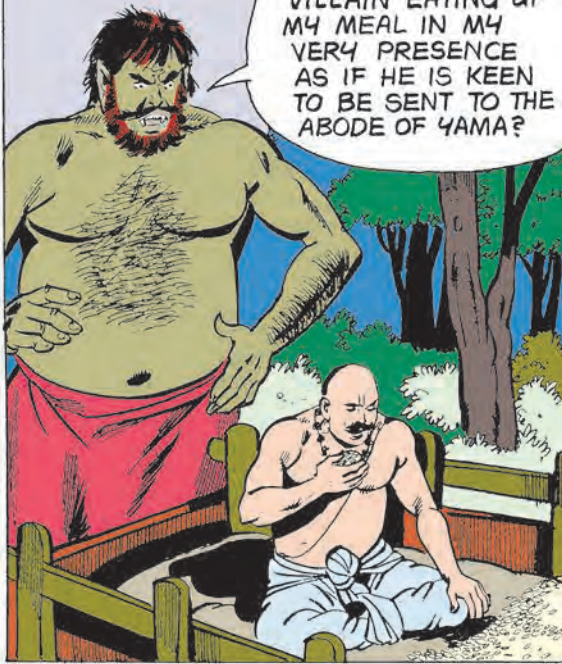


"...AND HE CAME WITH AN EARTH-SPLITTING TREAD. AND BEHOLDING BHEEMA EATING HIS FOOD..."



"...THE RAKSHASA CAME UP IN FERVID FURY AND SAID:

WHO IS THIS
VILLAIN EATING UP
MY MEAL IN MY
VERY PRESENCE
AS IF HE IS KEEN
TO BE SENT TO THE
ABODE OF YAMA?



"BHEEMA, O MONARCH, ONLY SMILED IN DERISION..."



"...AND CONTINUED TO EAT.
BEHOLDING
THIS..."



"...THE CANNIBAL LET OUT A TERRIBLE
ROAR..."



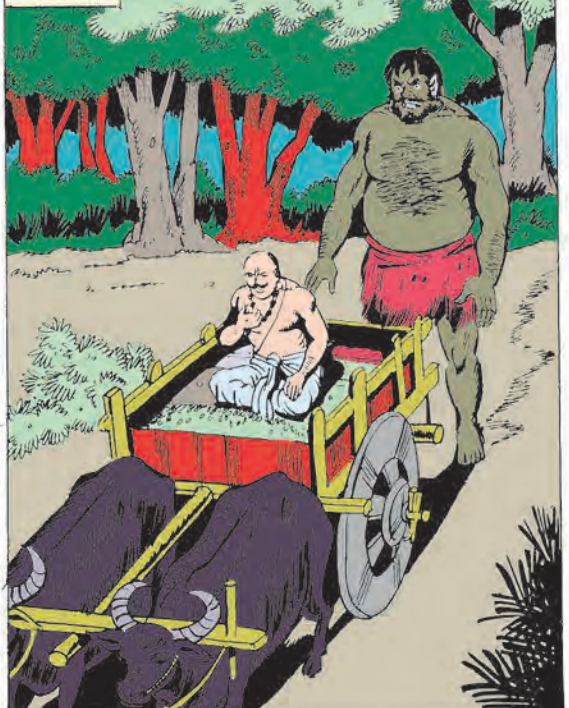
".. AND WITH UPRaised ARMS RUSHED TOWARDS BHEEMA INTENDING TO KILL HIM. BUT BHEEMA IN UTTER CONTEMPT WENT ON EATING THE RAKSHASA'S FOOD.



" OVERCOME BY RAGE THE RAKSHASA BROUGHT DOWN HIS FISTS ON BHEEMA, FROM BEHIND.



" BUT BHEEMA CONTINUED TO EAT WITHOUT SO MUCH AS A GLANCE AT HIM.



"THEN THE RAKSHASA, BEYOND HIMSELF WITH ANGER, UPROOTED A TREE..."



"...AND HURLED IT AT BHEEMA WHO HAVING FINISHED THE RICE STOOD CHEERFULLY READY FOR FIGHT."



"BHEEMA PLAYFULLY CAUGHT THE TREE IN HIS LEFT HAND ..."



"... AND HURLED IT BACK AT THE RAKSHASA.



" THEN, O MONARCH, THE RAKSHASA UPROOTED MANY MORE TREES AND HURLED THEM AT BHEEMA...



... AND BHEEMA SMOTE HIM WITH AS MANY IN RETURN. THAT TERRIBLE COMBAT BETWEEN THE PRINCE AND THE CANNIBAL RAGED SO FIERCE THAT THE FOREST AROUND WAS SOON DENUDED OF TREES.



" THEN THE RAKSHASA SPRANG UPON BHEEMA AND SEIZED HIM. THE MIGHTY HERO ALSO HAD HIM IN HIS CLUTCHES.



" AND HE BEGAN DRAGGING HIM VIOLENTLY. THE CANNIBAL IN TURN PITTED HIS FORCE AGAINST THAT OF BHEEMA. THE VERY EARTH SEEMED TO TREMBLE UNDER THE FORCE UNLEASHED BY THE TWO.



" THEN BEHOLDING THAT THE CANNIBAL WAS OVERCOME BY FATIGUE, BHEEMA LAID HIM LOW AND PRESSED HIM DOWN WITH HIS KNEES.



"THEN HE SEIZED HIS NECK..."



"...AND BENT HIM DOUBLE WITH ALL HIS MIGHT. THE CANNIBAL EXPELLED A ROAR OF PAIN..."

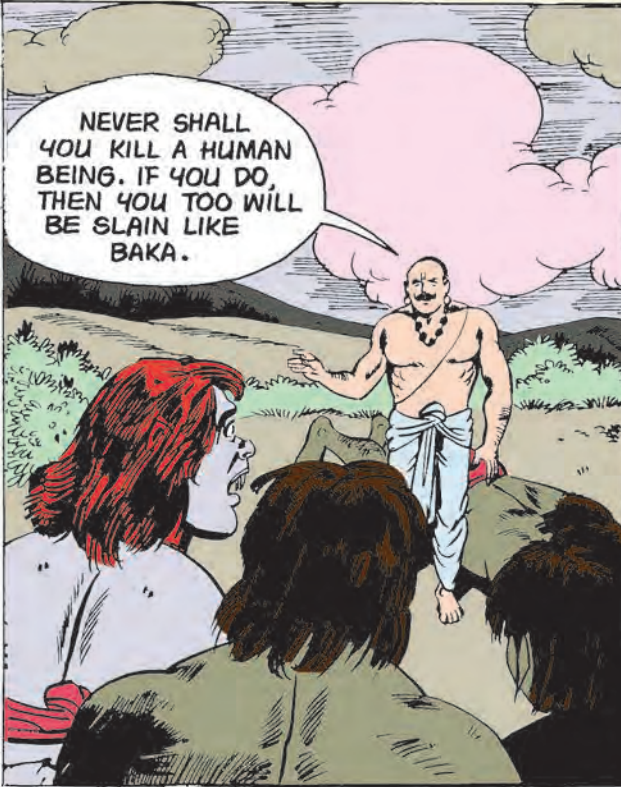


"...AND FELL DEAD. AND THE KINSMEN OF THE RAKSHASA, TERRIFIED BY THE ROAR, CAME OUT WITH THEIR ATTENDANTS."



"WHEN BHEEMA SAW THE TERROR-STRUCK GROUP, HE COMFORTED THEM AND SAID:

NEVER SHALL
YOU KILL A HUMAN
BEING. IF YOU DO,
THEN YOU TOO WILL
BE SLAIN LIKE
BAKA.



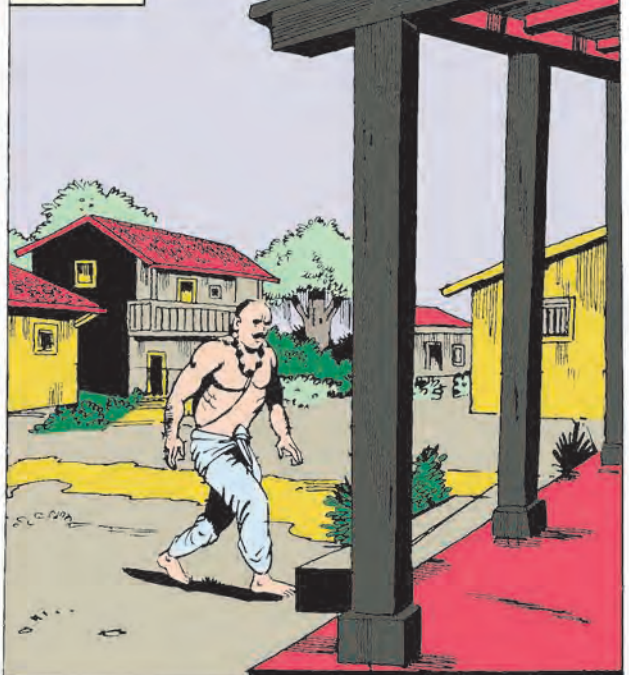
"THE RAKSHASAS CONSENTED,
O MONARCH, TO ABIDE BY THE
COMMANDMENTS OF BHEEMA.
THEN BHEEMA CARRIED THE
LIFELESS CANNIBAL ...



"...TO THE TOWN GATES, DEPOSITED
HIM THERE UNOBSERVED BY ANYONE...



"...AND RETURNED TO THE BRAHMANA'S
HOUSE.



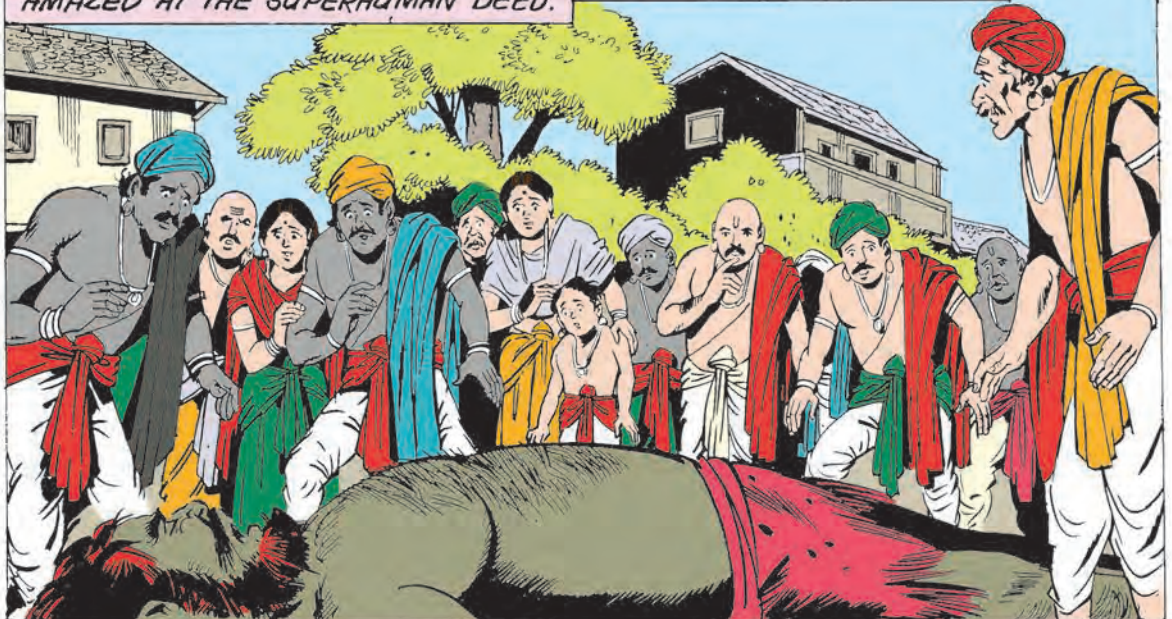
"THE NEXT MORNING, AS THEY CAME OUT OF THE TOWN, THE PEOPLE SAW THE RAKSHASA DEAD ON THE GROUND, GLUTTED IN GORE."



"THEY WENT BACK AND SPREAD THE TIDINGS."

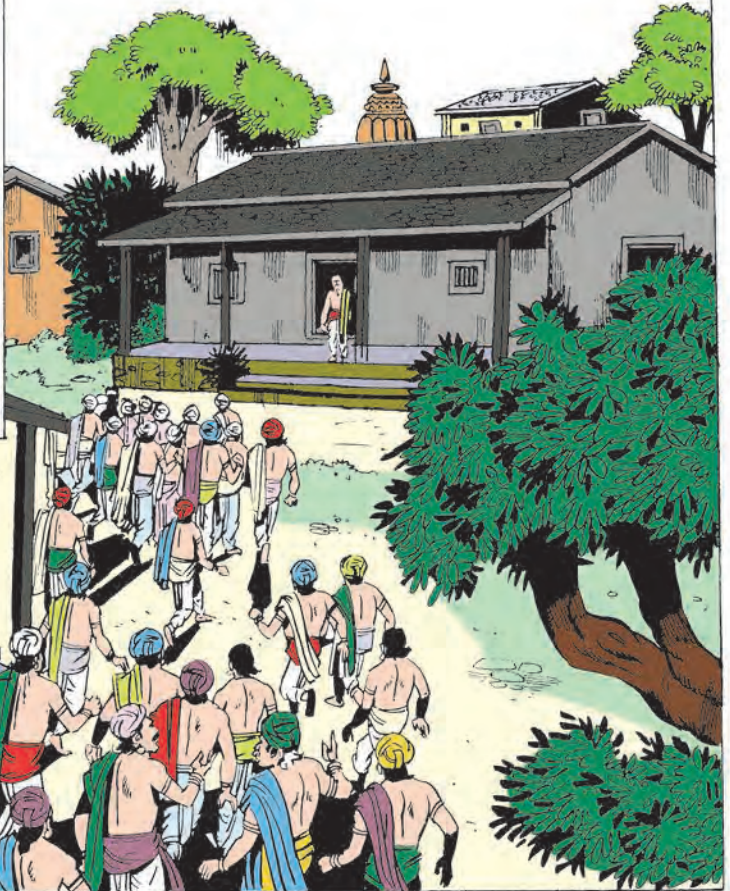


"AND THOUSANDS OF MEN, YOUNG AND OLD WITH THEIR WIVES AND CHILDREN, THROGGED THE SPOT TO SEE BAKA DEAD AND WERE AMAZED AT THE SUPERHUMAN DEED."



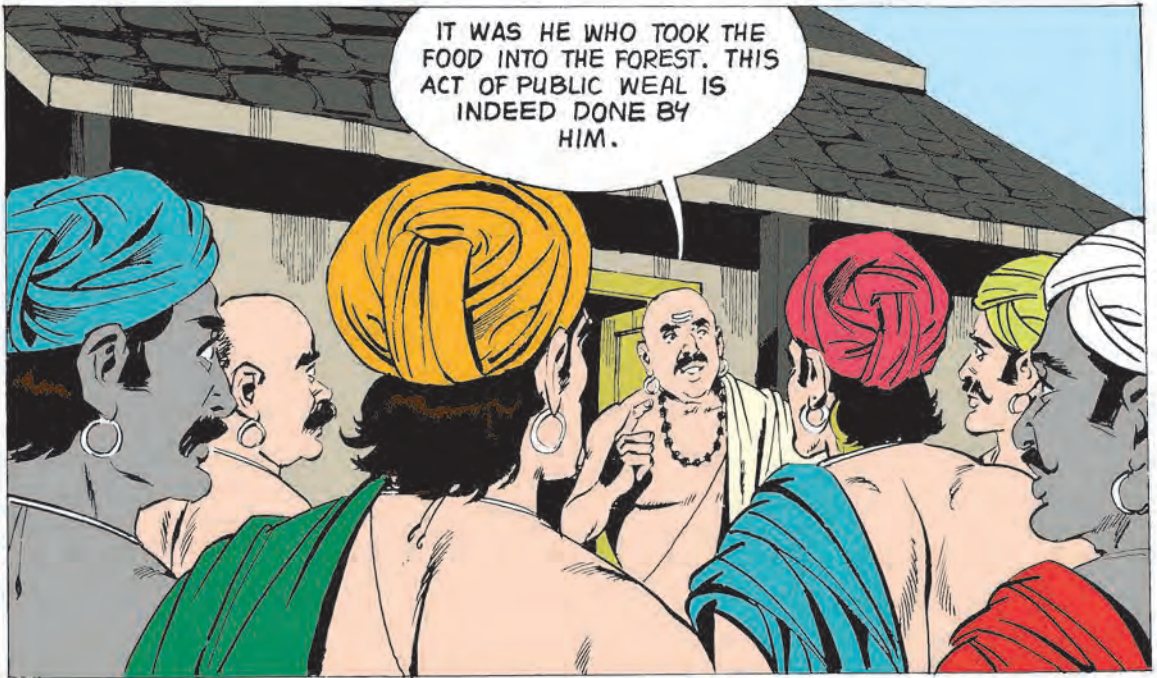


" THEN THEY WENT TO THE HOUSE OF THE BRAHMANA...



"...AND QUESTIONED HIM. HE SAID TO THOSE IMPORTUNATE MEN:

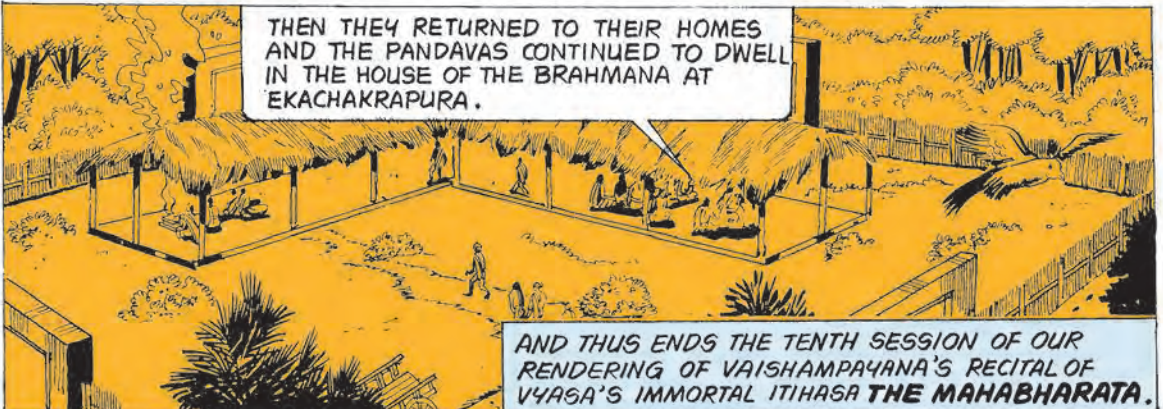




" THEN, O MONARCH, THE CITIZENS, FILLED WITH WONDER, CELEBRATED A FESTIVAL IN HONOUR OF THE BRAHMANA WHO HAD BROUGHT THEM SUCH ABUNDANT JOY.



THEN THEY RETURNED TO THEIR HOMES AND THE PANDAVAS CONTINUED TO DWELL IN THE HOUSE OF THE BRAHMANA AT EKACHAKRAPURA.



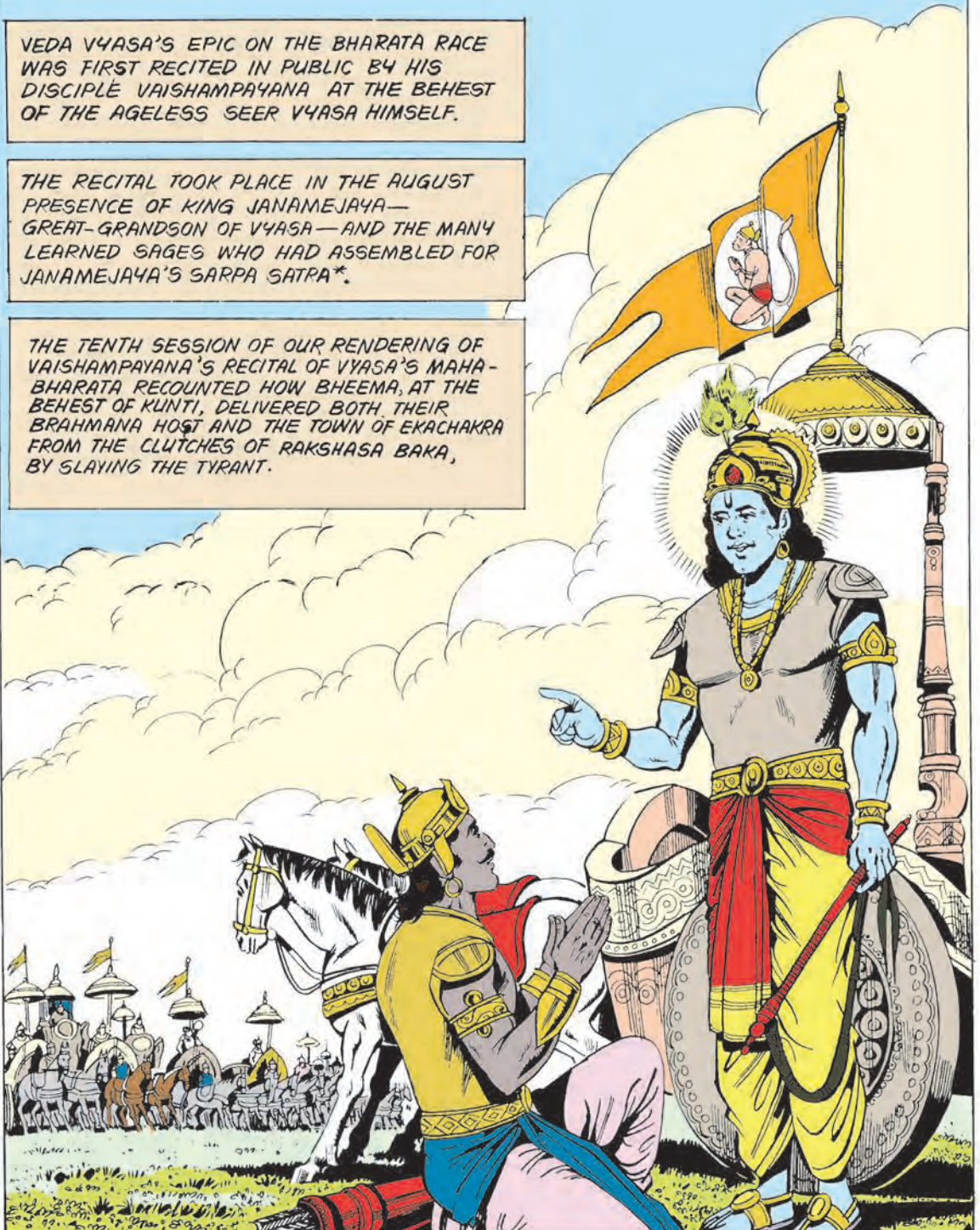
Mahabharata- 11

ENTER DRAUPADI

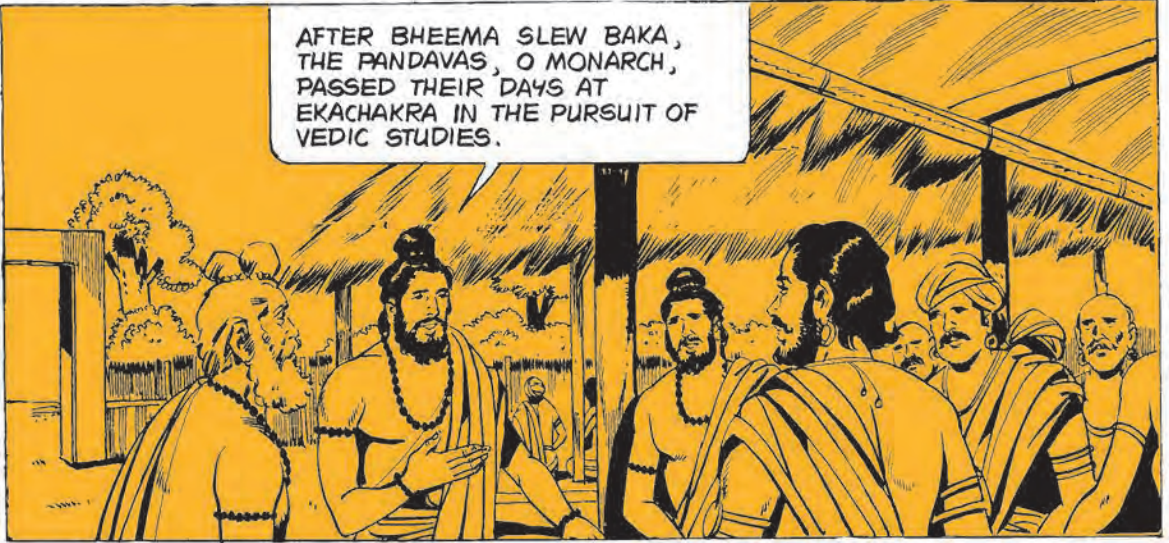
VEDA VYASA'S EPIC ON THE BHARATA RACE WAS FIRST RECITED IN PUBLIC BY HIS DISCIPLE VAISHAMPAYANA AT THE BEHEST OF THE AGELESS SEER VYASA HIMSELF.

THE RECITAL TOOK PLACE IN THE AUGUST PRESENCE OF KING JANAMEJAYA— GREAT-GRANDSON OF VYASA—AND THE MANY LEARNED SAGES WHO HAD ASSEMBLED FOR JANAMEJAYA'S SARPA SATRA*.

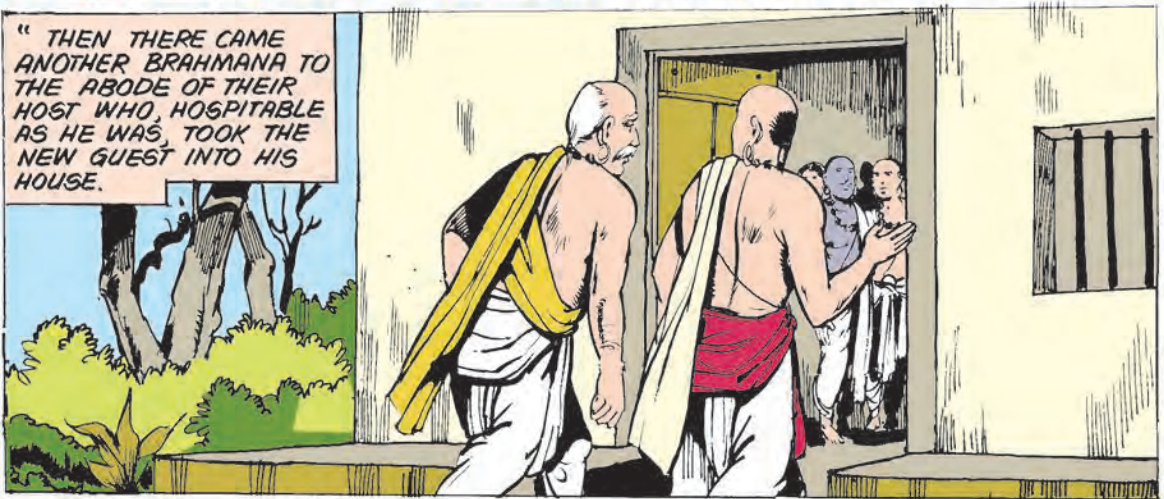
THE TENTH SESSION OF OUR RENDERING OF VAISHAMPAYANA'S RECITAL OF VYASA'S MAHA-BHARATA RECOUNTED HOW BHEEMA, AT THE BEHEST OF KUNTI, DELIVERED BOTH THEIR BRAHMANA HOST AND THE TOWN OF EKACHAKRA FROM THE CLUTCHES OF RAKSHASA BAKA, BY SLAYING THE TYRANT.



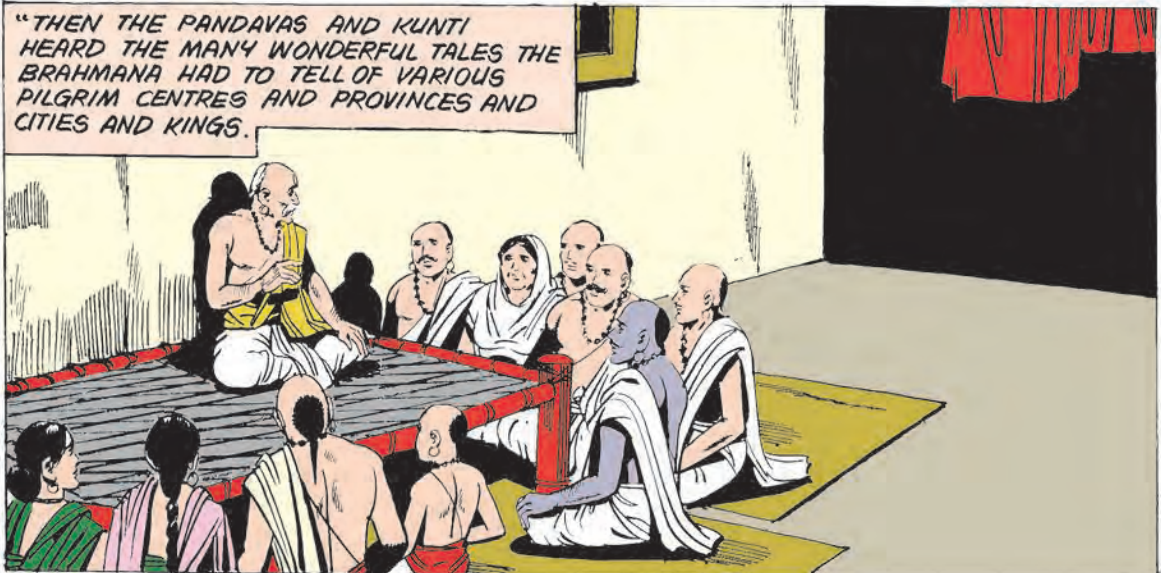
AFTER BHEEMA SLEW BAKA,
THE PANDAVAS, O MONARCH,
PASSED THEIR DAYS AT
EKACHAKRA IN THE PURSUIT OF
VEDIC STUDIES.



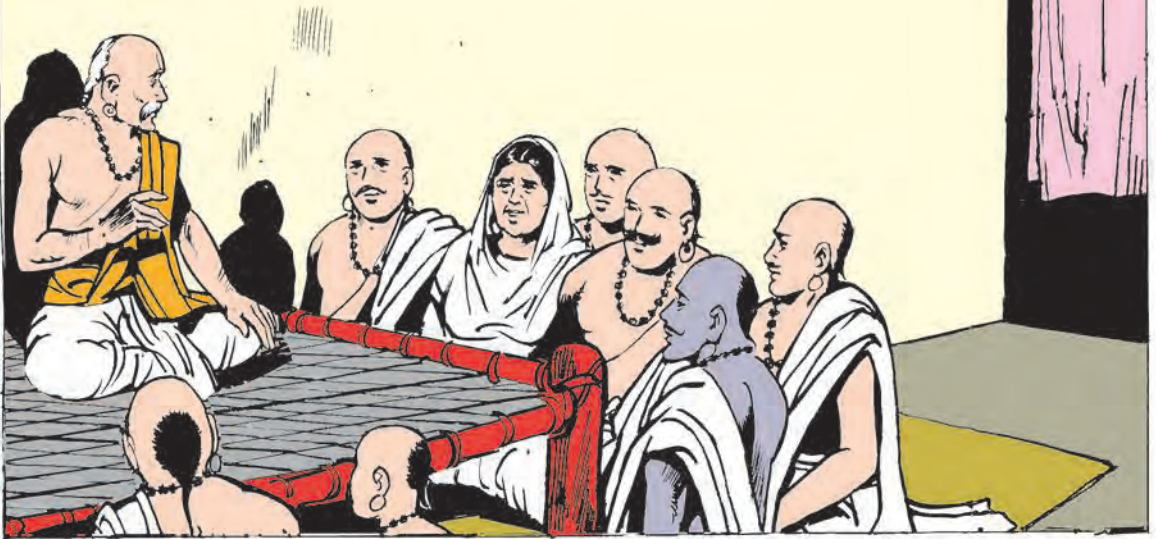
" THEN THERE CAME
ANOTHER BRAHMANA TO
THE ABODE OF THEIR
HOST WHO, HOSPITABLE
AS HE WAS, TOOK THE
NEW GUEST INTO HIS
HOUSE.



" THEN THE PANDAVAS AND KUNTI
HEARD THE MANY WONDERFUL TALES THE
BRAHMANA HAD TO TELL OF VARIOUS
PILGRIM CENTRES AND PROVINCES AND
CITIES AND KINGS.

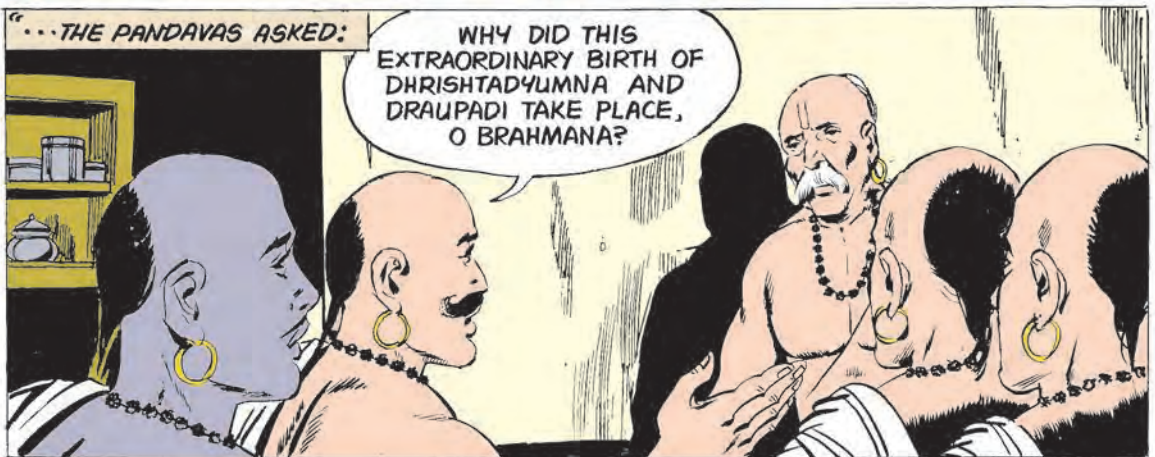


"WHEN HE SPOKE OF THE MARVELLOUS BIRTHS OF DHRISHTADYUMNA AND DRAUPADI AT THE YAGNA OF DRUPADA..."



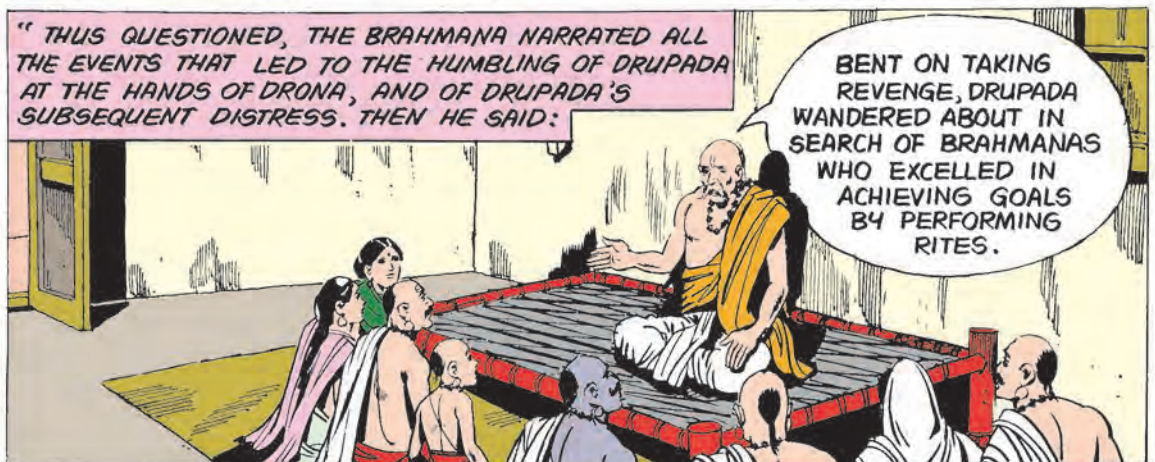
"...THE PANDAVAS ASKED:"

WHY DID THIS EXTRAORDINARY BIRTH OF DHRISHTADYUMNA AND DRAUPADI TAKE PLACE, O BRAHMANA?



"THUS QUESTIONED, THE BRAHMANA NARRATED ALL THE EVENTS THAT LED TO THE HUMBLING OF DRUPADA AT THE HANDS OF DRONA, AND OF DRUPADA'S SUBSEQUENT DISTRESS. THEN HE SAID:"

BENT ON TAKING REVENGE, DRUPADA WANDERED ABOUT IN SEARCH OF BRAHMANAS WHO EXCELLED IN ACHIEVING GOALS BY PERFORMING RITES.



"AND HE CAME UPON THE BRAHMANA BROTHERS, YAJA AND UPAYAJA, IN AN ASHRAMA ON THE BANKS OF THE GANGA AND YAMUNA.

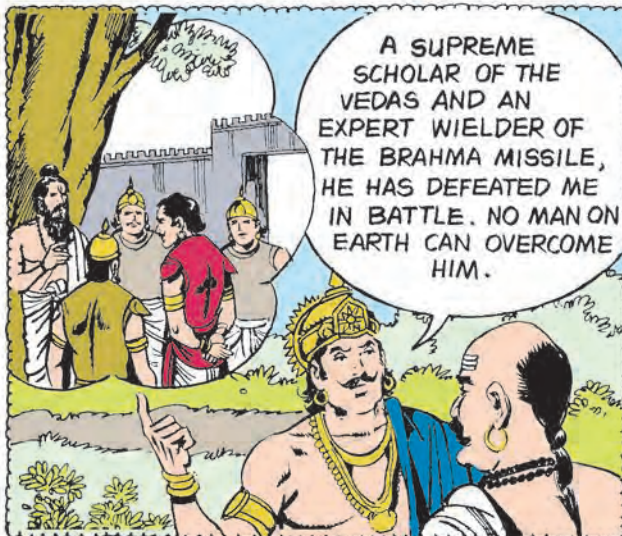


"HE SAID TO YAJA:

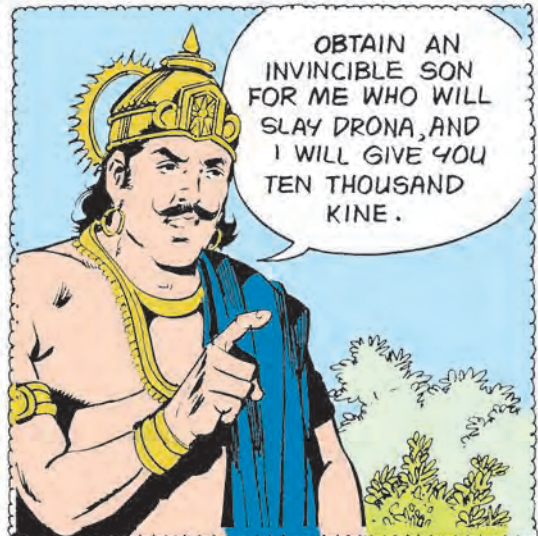
O YAJA, MY
HATRED FOR DRONA,
THE SON OF
BHARADWAJA AND THE
GURU OF THE KURUS,
BURNS ME UP.



A SUPREME
SCHOLAR OF THE
VEDAS AND AN
EXPERT WIELDER OF
THE BRAHMA MISSILE,
HE HAS DEFEATED ME
IN BATTLE. NO MAN ON
EARTH CAN OVERCOME
HIM.

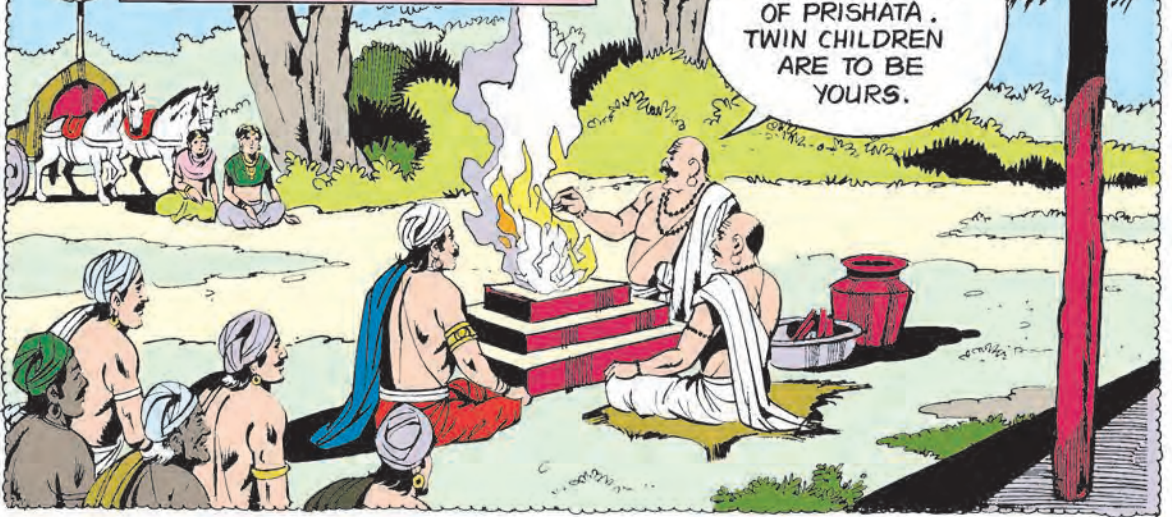


OBTAIN AN
INVINCIBLE SON
FOR ME WHO WILL
SLAY DRONA, AND
I WILL GIVE YOU
TEN THOUSAND
KINE.



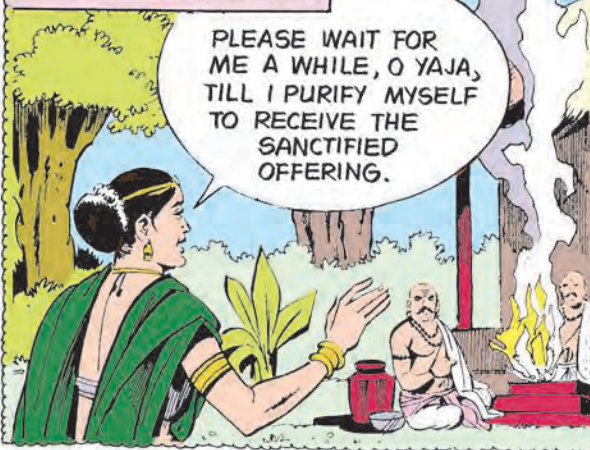
"YAJA AGREED AND DRUPADA PROCURED ALL THAT WAS NEEDED. TOWARDS THE END OF THE RITES, YAJA SAID TO DRUPADA'S QUEEN:

COME, DAUGHTER-IN-LAW OF PRISHATA. TWIN CHILDREN ARE TO BE YOURS.



"THE QUEEN CRIED OUT:

PLEASE WAIT FOR ME A WHILE, O YAJA, TILL I PURIFY MYSELF TO RECEIVE THE SANCTIFIED OFFERING.



MY FACE AND MY BODY NEED ABLUTION. O WAIT FOR ME A WHILE.



"BUT YAJA SAID:

THIS OFFERING PREPARED BY YAJA AND SANCTIFIED BY UPAYAJA WILL BEAR FRUIT WHETHER YOU ARE PRESENT OR NOT.



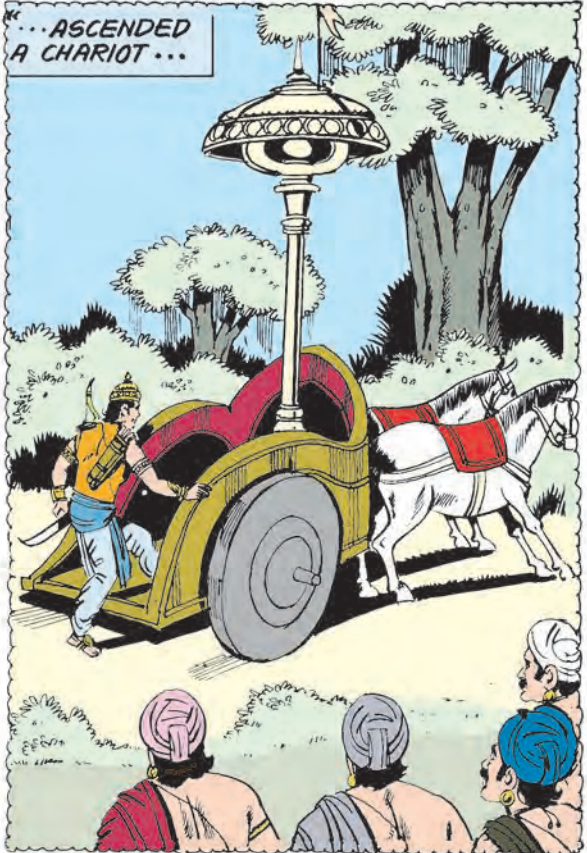
"AND HE POURED THE OFFERING INTO THE SACRIFICIAL FIRE.



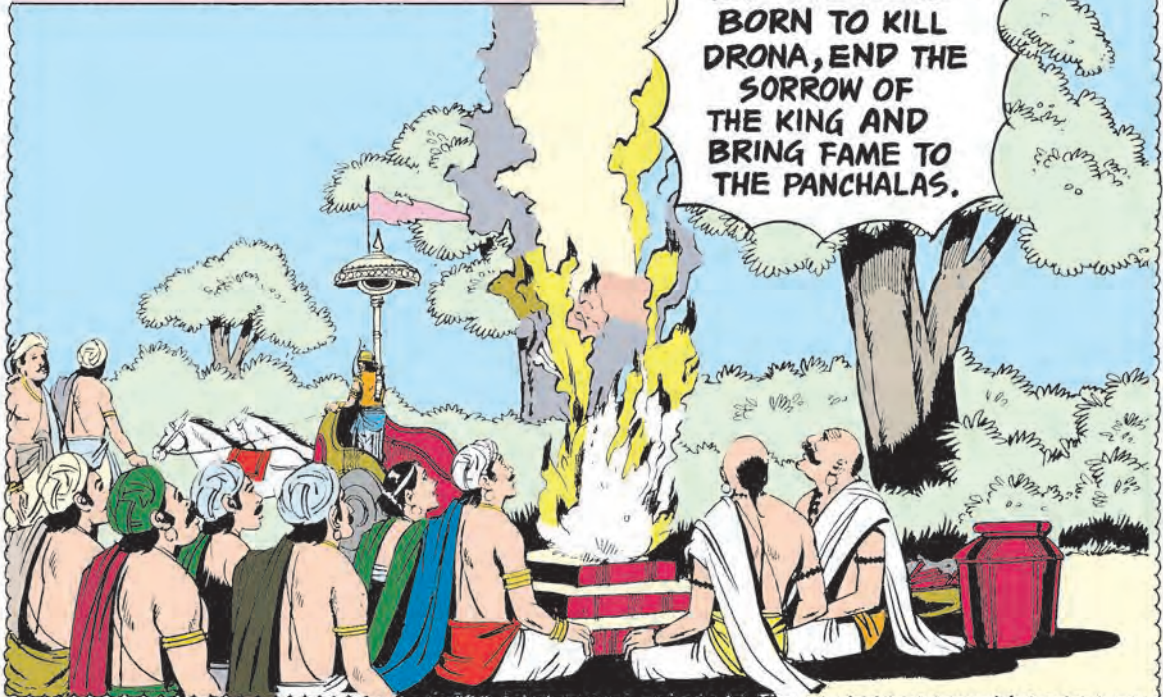
" THEN THERE SPRANG FROM THE FIRE
AN AWESOME YOUTH RADIANT LIKE A
CELESTIAL AND SPLENDIDLY ARRAYED
WHO AS SOON AS HE CAME FORTH...



... ASCENDED
A CHARIOT ...

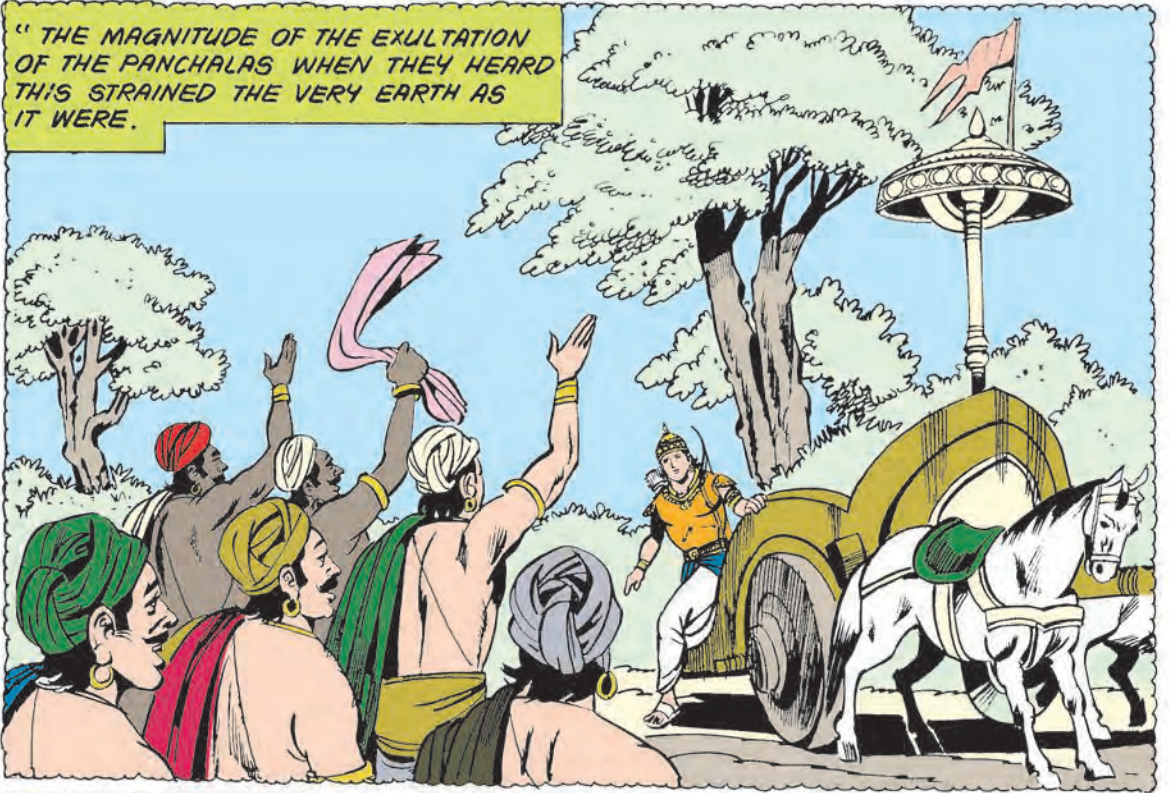


"... AND DROVE IT AROUND. THEN A VOICE
FROM THE REALMS ABOVE SAID:

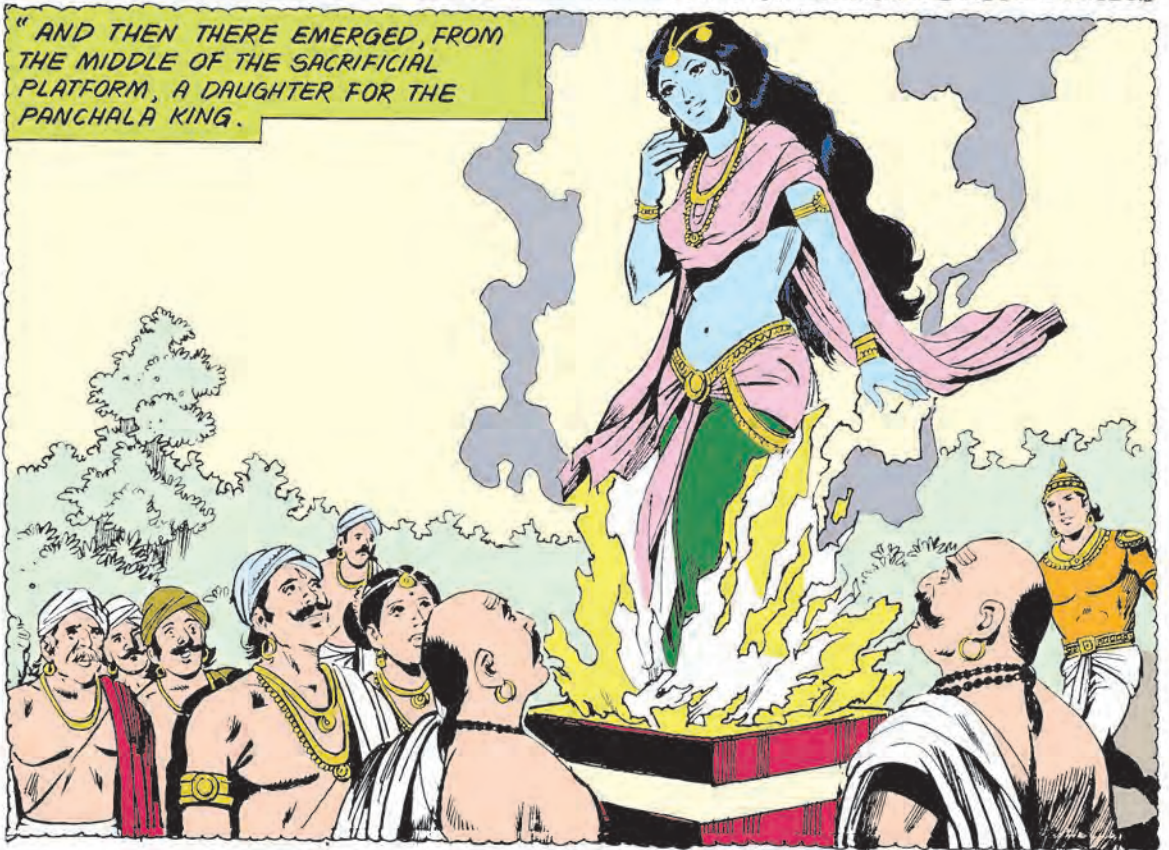


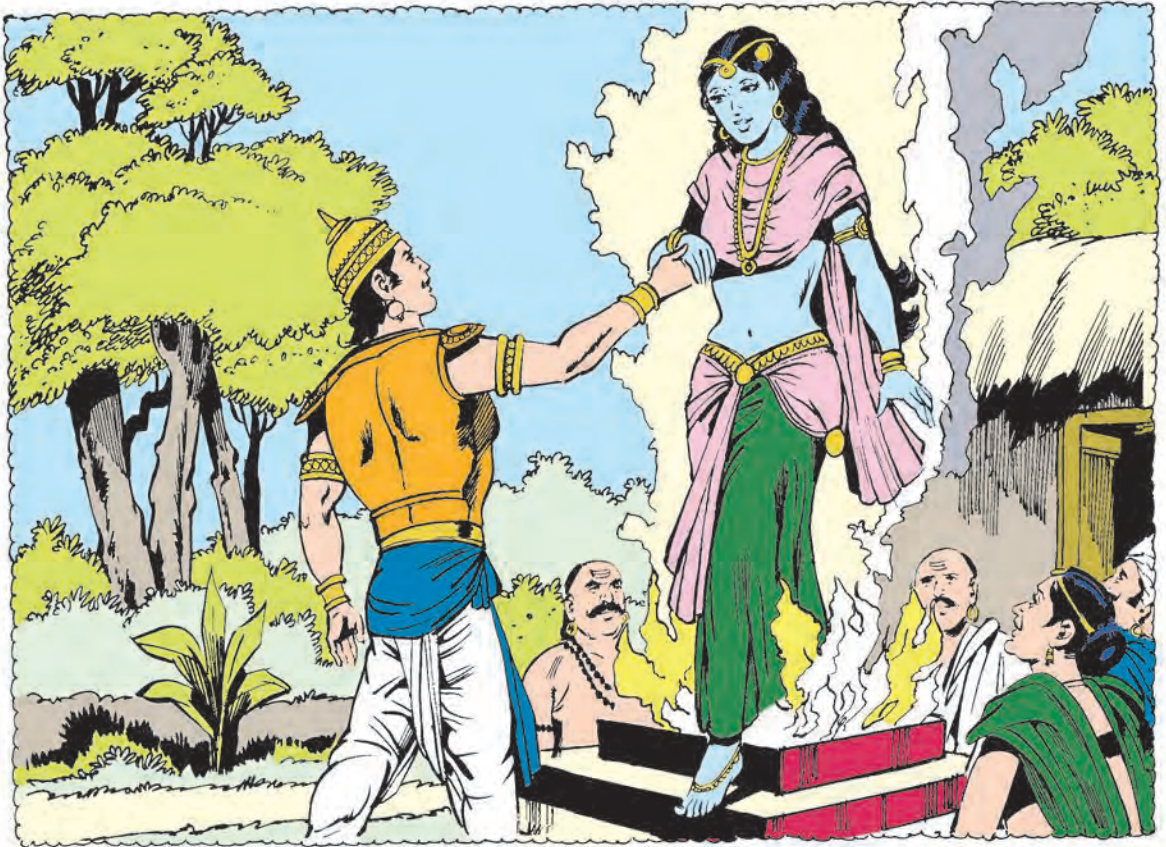
THIS PRINCE IS
BORN TO KILL
DRONA, END THE
SORROW OF
THE KING AND
BRING FAME TO
THE PANCHALAS.

"THE MAGNITUDE OF THE EXULTATION OF THE PANCHALAS WHEN THEY HEARD THIS STRAINED THE VERY EARTH AS IT WERE."



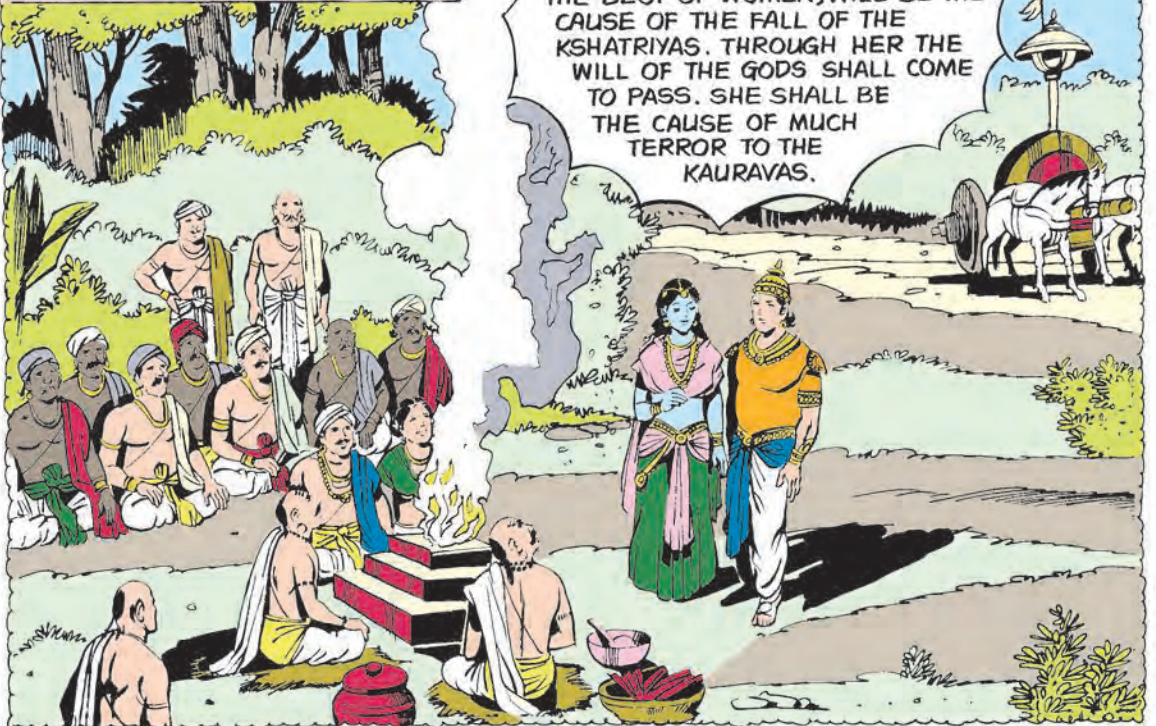
"AND THEN THERE EMERGED, FROM THE MIDDLE OF THE SACRIFICIAL PLATFORM, A DAUGHTER FOR THE PANCHALA KING."

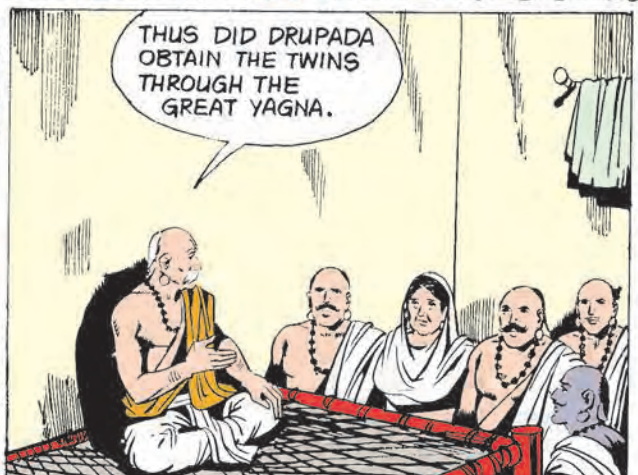
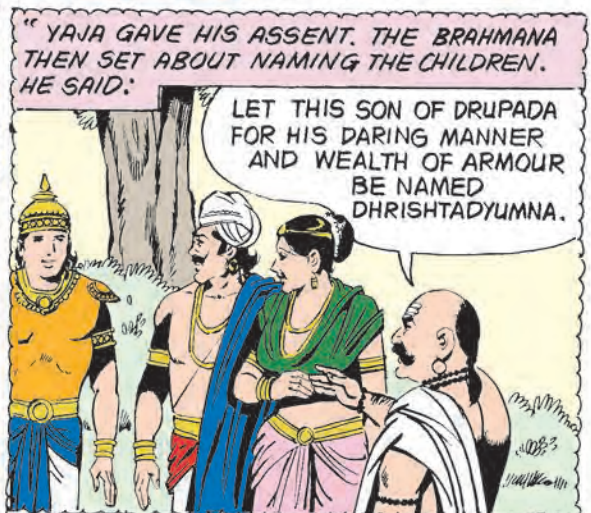
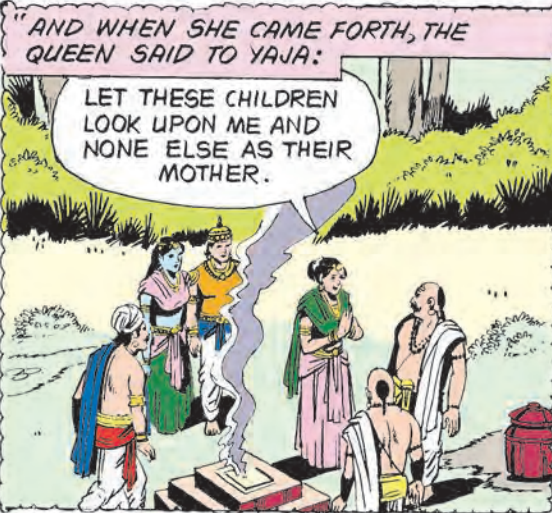
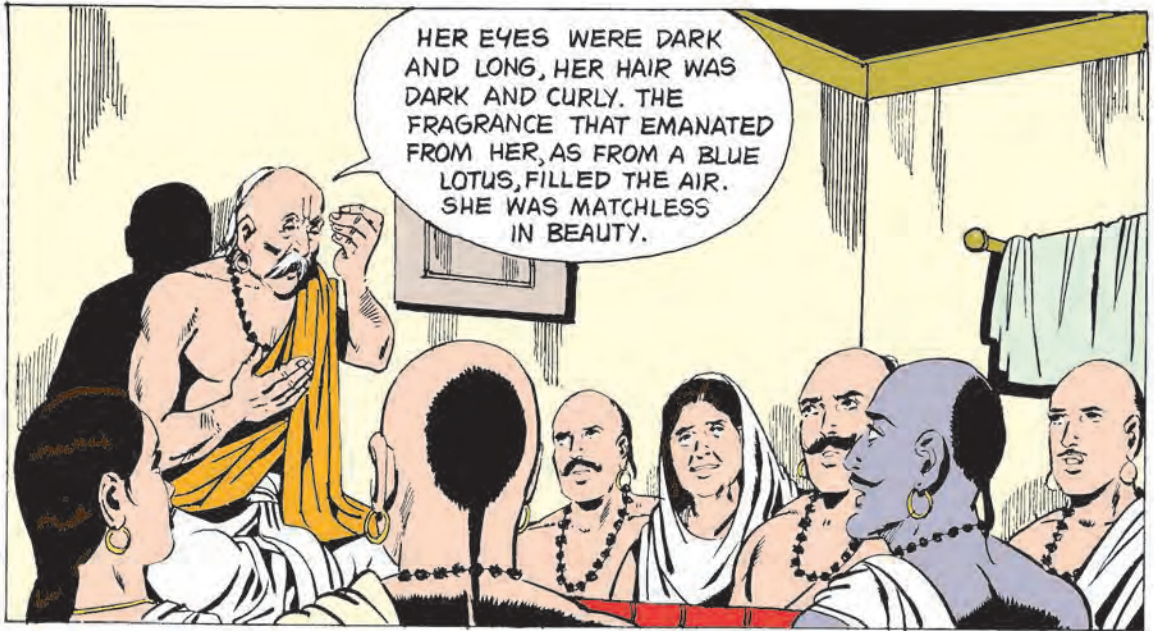


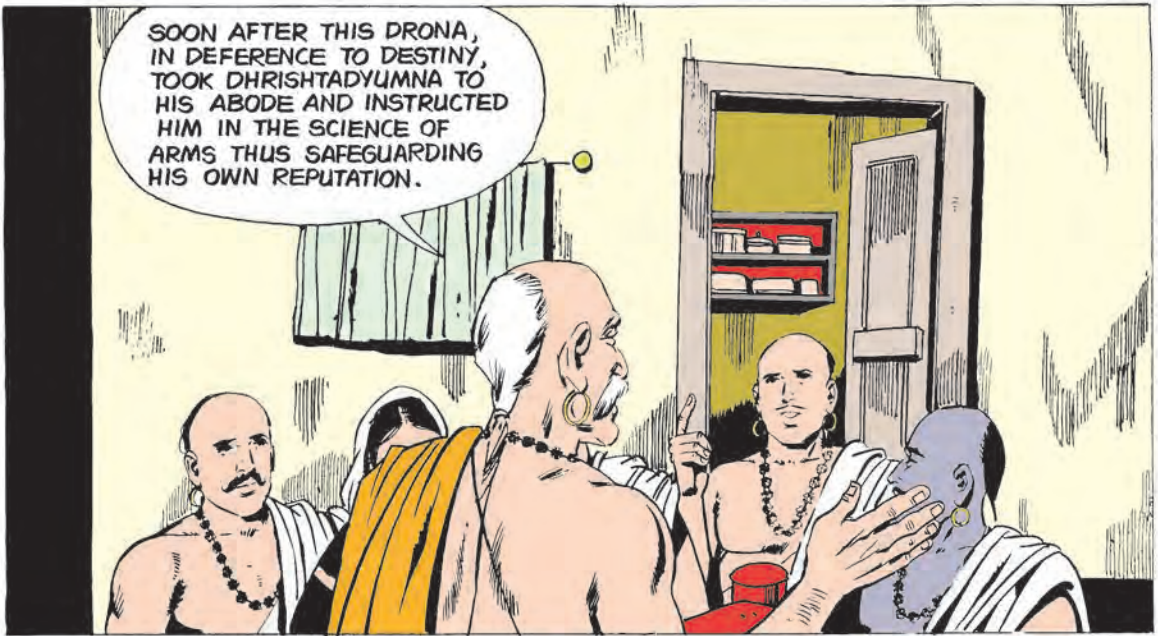


"AND A VOICE FROM ABOVE SAID:

THIS GIRL, DARK OF SKIN AND
THE BEST OF WOMEN, WILL BE THE
CAUSE OF THE FALL OF THE
KSHATRIYAS. THROUGH HER THE
WILL OF THE GODS SHALL COME
TO PASS. SHE SHALL BE
THE CAUSE OF MUCH
TERROR TO THE
KAURAVAS.



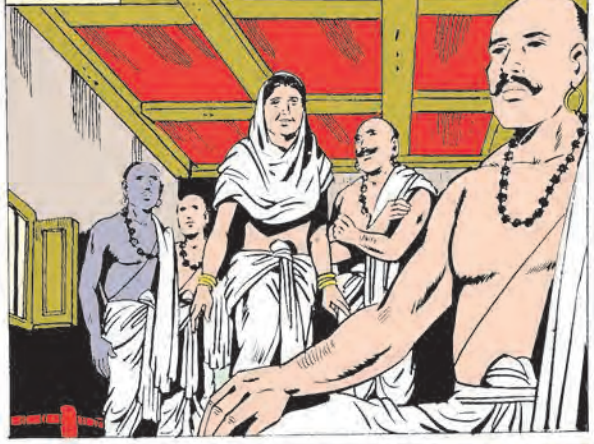




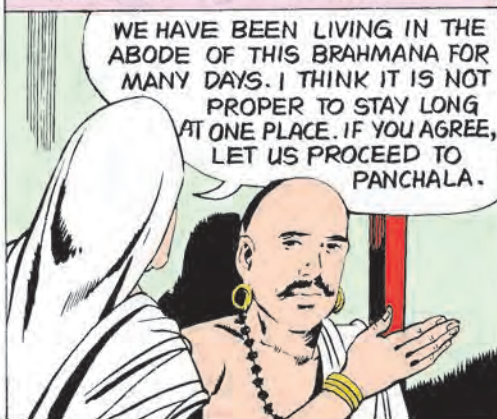
"SMITTEN BY ALL THAT THEY HAD HEARD, THE SONS OF KUNTI, THOSE MIGHTY HEROES, BECAME RESTLESS IN MIND.



"OBSERVING THE TROUBLED STATE OF HER SONS..."

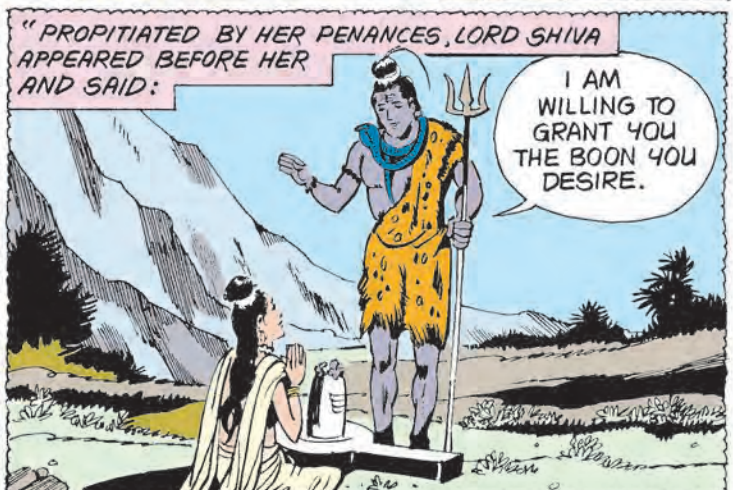
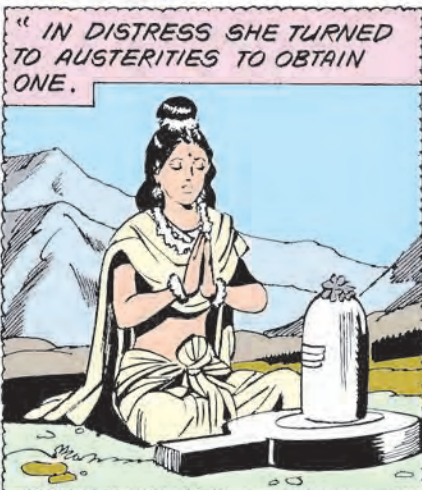
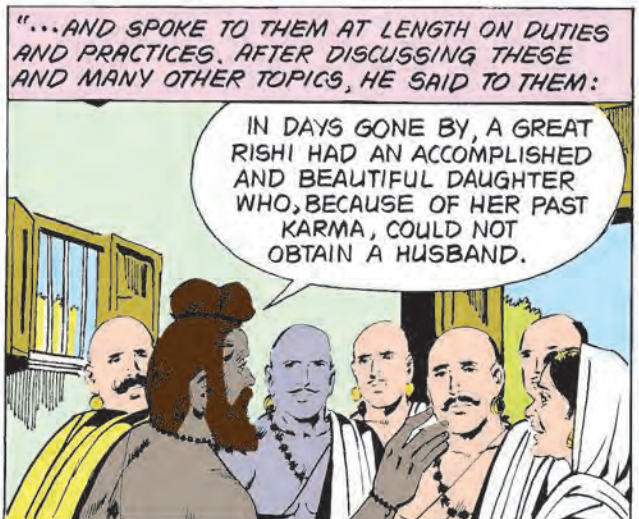
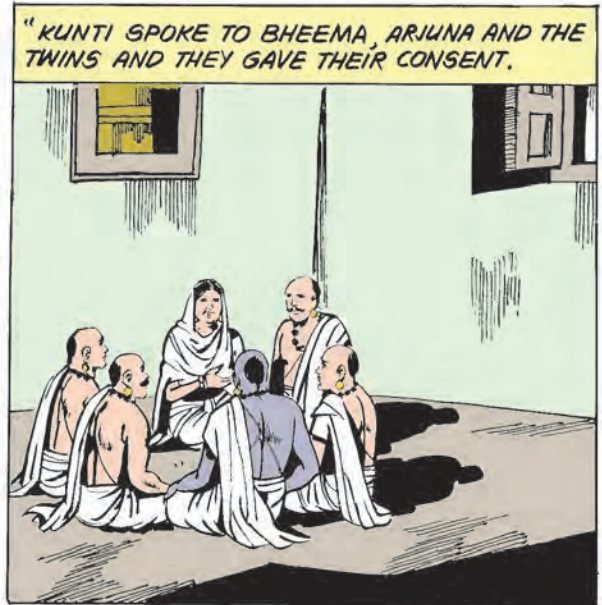


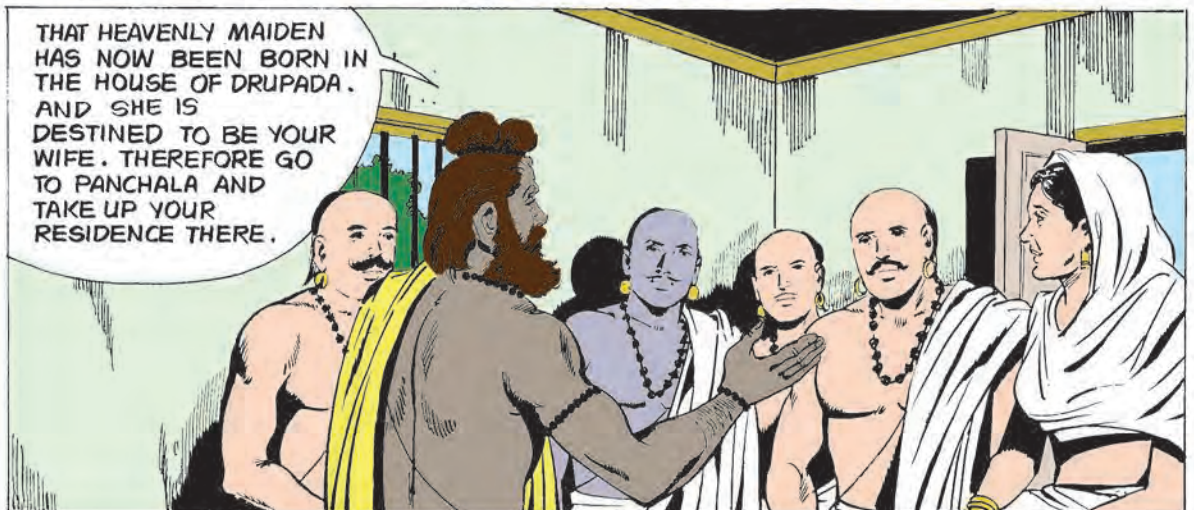
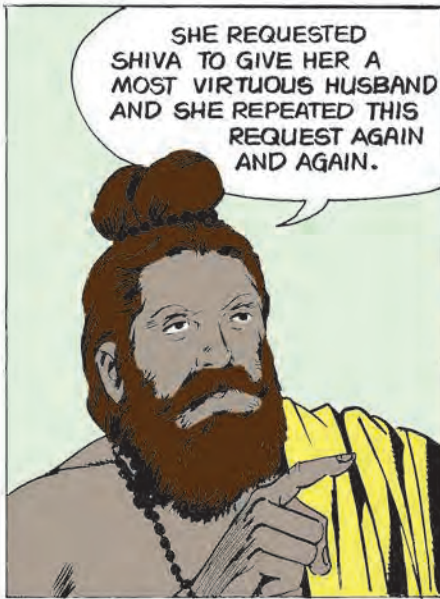
"...KUNTI SAID TO YUDHISHTHIRA :

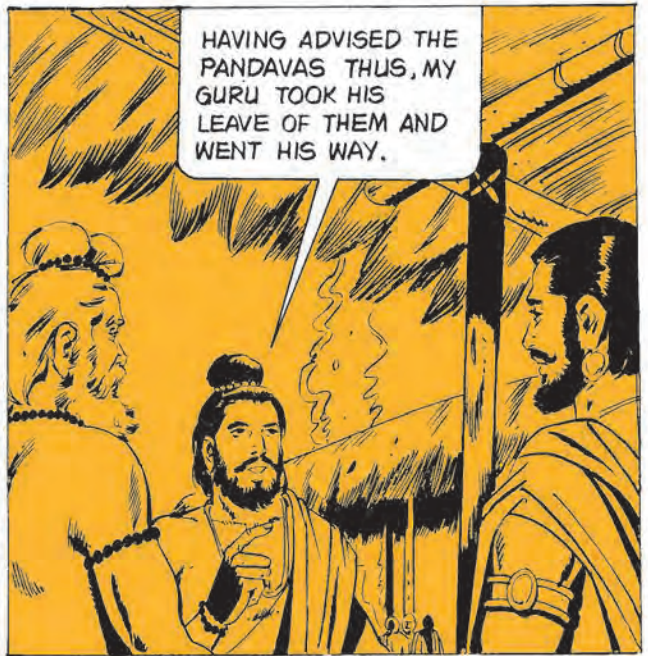


" AND YUDHISHTHIRA REPLIED :

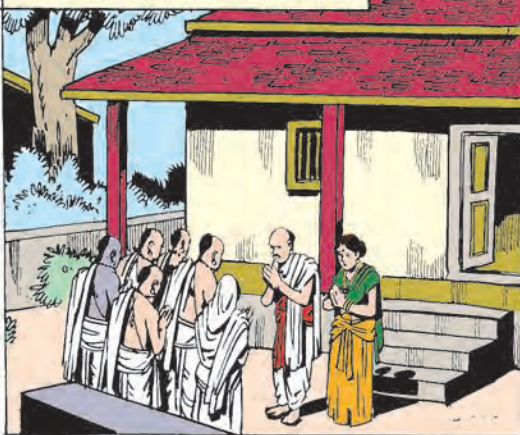








"THEN THE PANDAVAS BID THE BRAHMANA FAREWELL, SALUTED HIM..."



"...AND SET OUT.



"TURNING THEIR STEPS NORTHWARDS, LED BY ARJUNA WHO HELD A TORCH ALOFT, THEY WALKED DAY AND NIGHT TILL..."



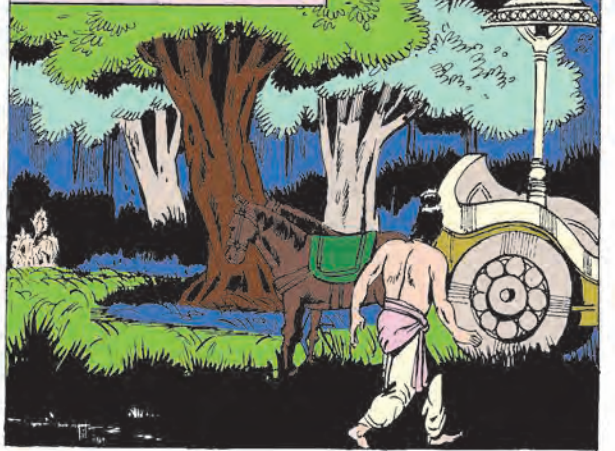
"...THEY CAME TO THE BANKS OF THE GANGA. THERE IN THAT SECLUDED SPOT, THE KING OF THE GANDHARVAS WAS SPORTING WITH HIS WIVES IN THE WATERS OF THE RIVER.



"AND HE HEARD THEIR FOOTFALLS AS THEY CAME ALONG THE RIVERSIDE.



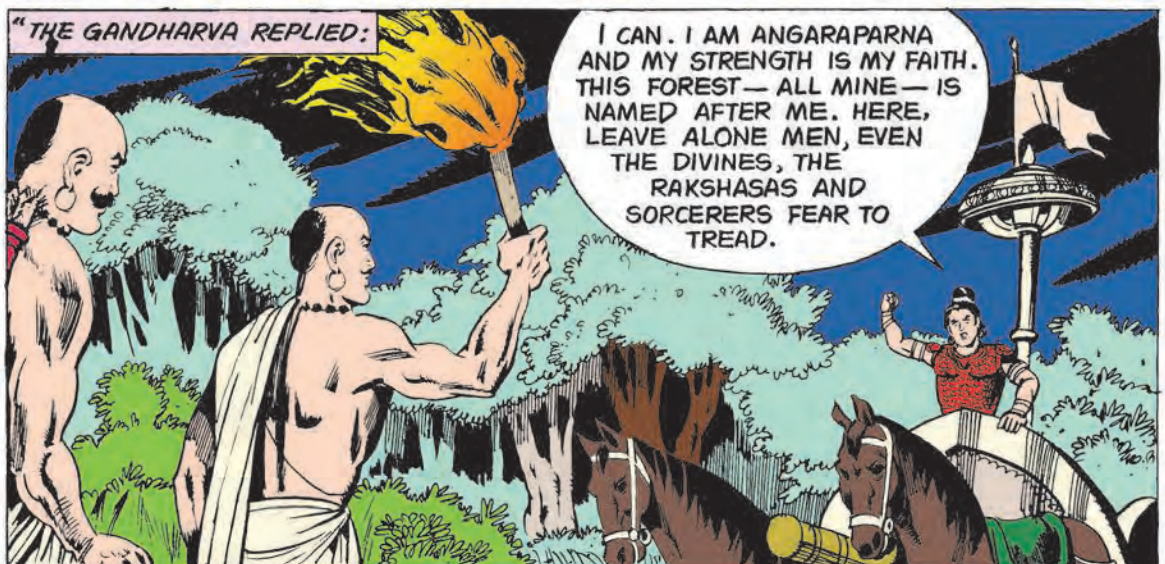
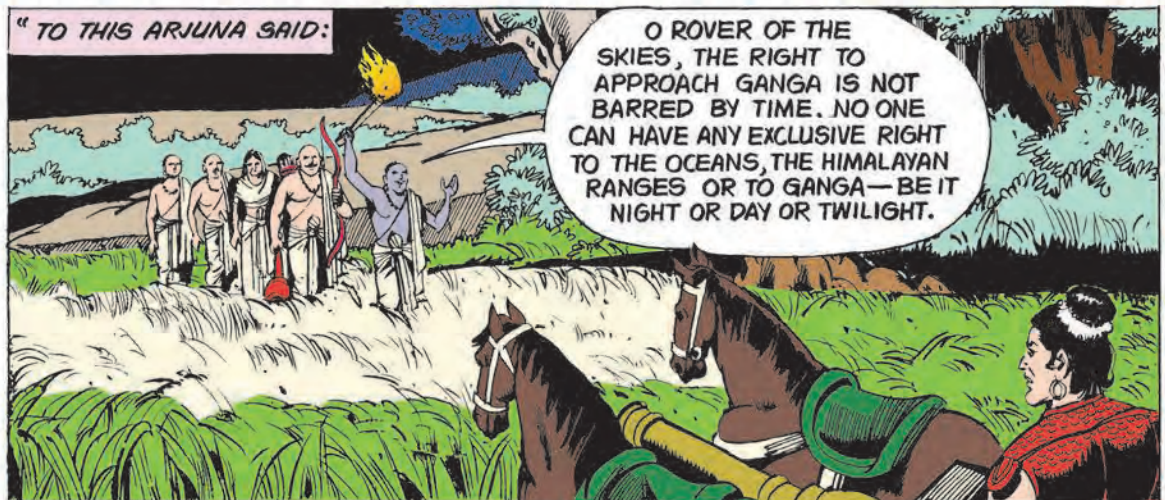
"WHEN THE PANDAVAS AND THEIR MOTHER CAME INTO HIS VIEW ...



"...HE SHOUTED:

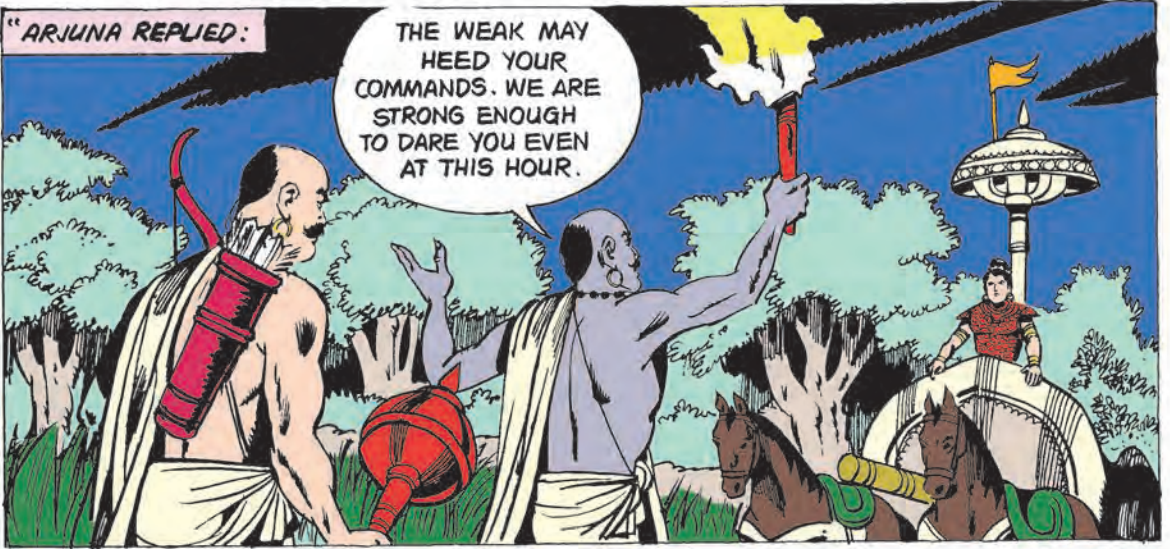


STAY WHERE YOU ARE! THE TWILIGHT HOURS ARE EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE YAKSHAS, THE GANDHARVAS AND THE RAKSHASAS.

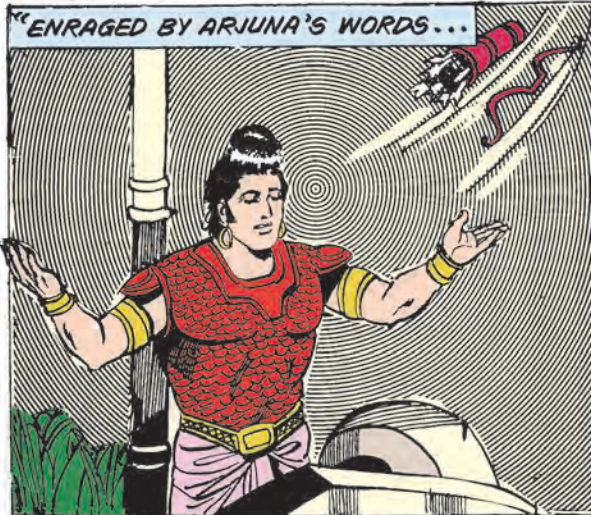


"ARJUNA REPLIED:

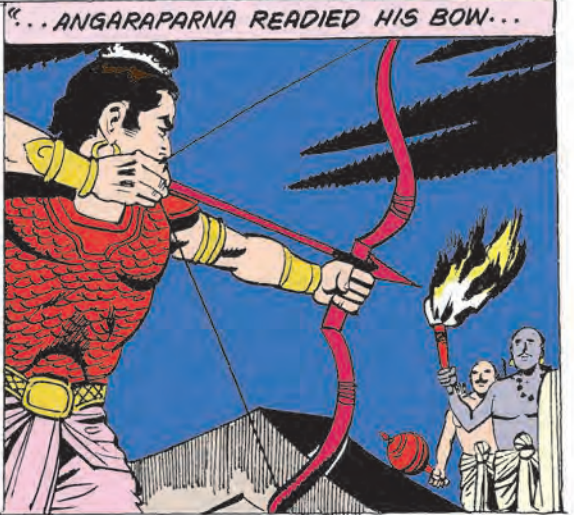
THE WEAK MAY
HEED YOUR
COMMANDS. WE ARE
STRONG ENOUGH
TO DARE YOU EVEN
AT THIS HOUR.



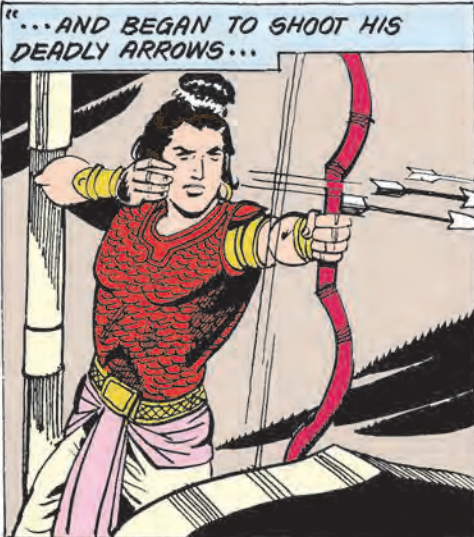
"ENRAGED BY ARJUNA'S WORDS...



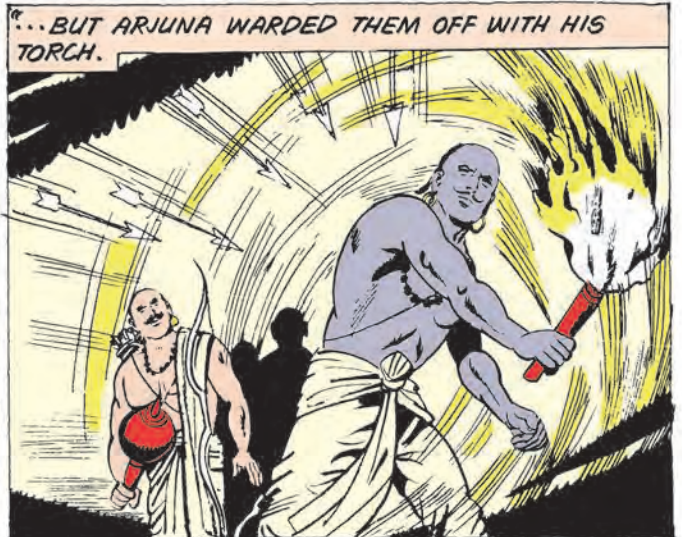
"...ANGARAPARNA READIED HIS BOW...

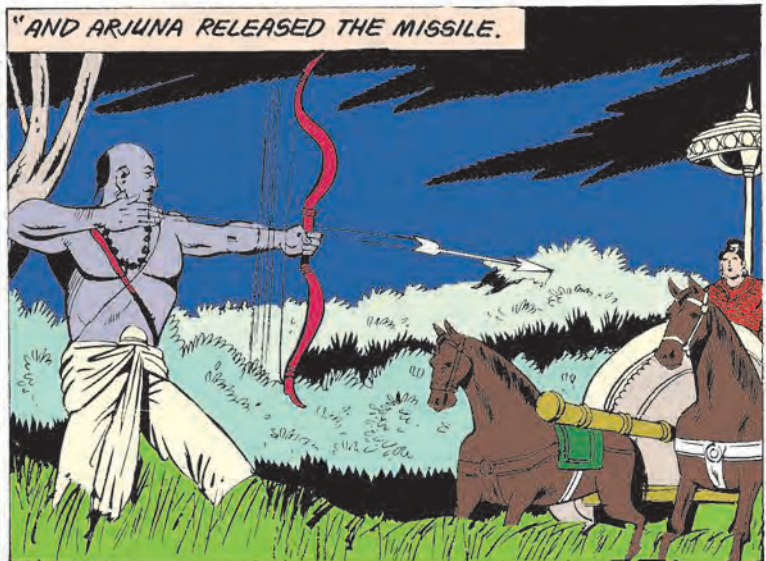
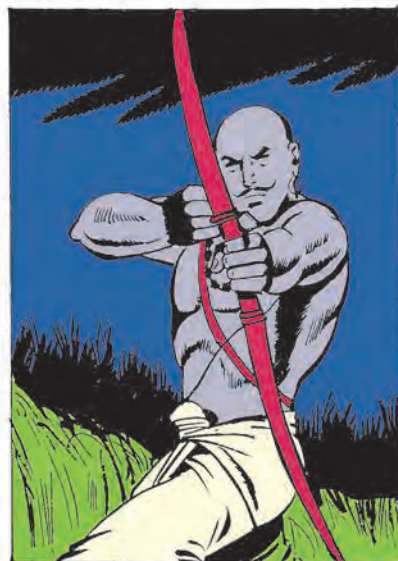
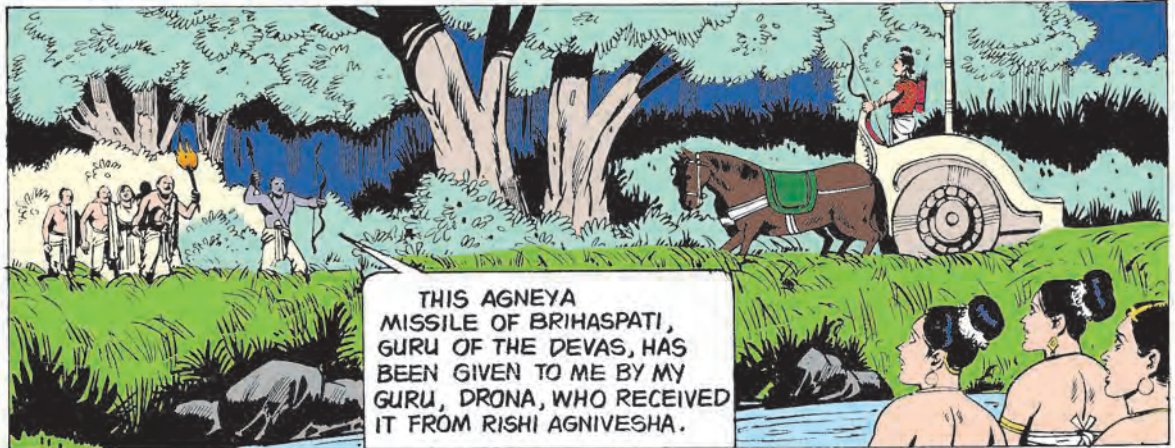
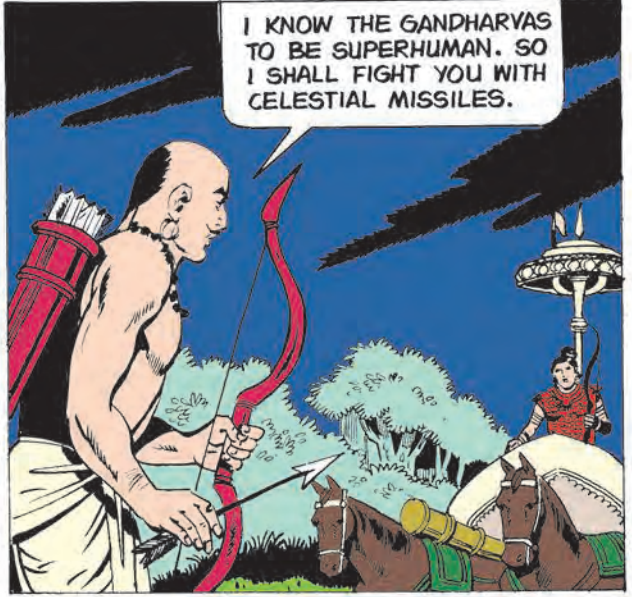


"...AND BEGAN TO SHOOT HIS
DEADLY ARROWS...



"...BUT ARJUNA WARDED THEM OFF WITH HIS
TORCH.





"THE BLAZING MISSILE BURNT DOWN THE GANDHARVA'S CHARIOT AND STUNNED BY THE FORCE OF THAT WEAPON..."



"... HE FELL HEADLONG FROM THE CHARIOT. AS HE FELL ARIJUNA SEIZED HIM BY HIS HAIR..."



"... AND DRAGGED HIM TOWARDS HIS BROTHERS."



"KUMBHEENASI, THE GANDHARVA'S WIFE, ALL ANXIOUS TO SAVE HER HUSBAND'S LIFE, RAN TOWARDS YUDHISHTHIRA AND PLEADED:"



SAVE ME,
O NOBLE ONE.
SAVE MY HUSBAND
AND SAVE ME.
I AM KUMBHEENASI.

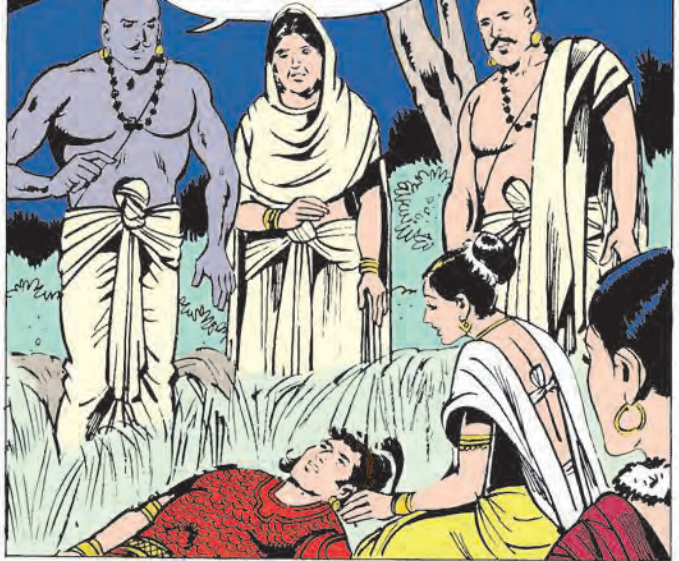
"YUDHISHTHIRA SAID TO ARJUNA:

DEAR BROTHER, RELEASE HIM. WHO WOULD SLAY A FOE DEFEATED, HUMILIATED AND IN NEED OF THE PROTECTION OF A WOMAN?



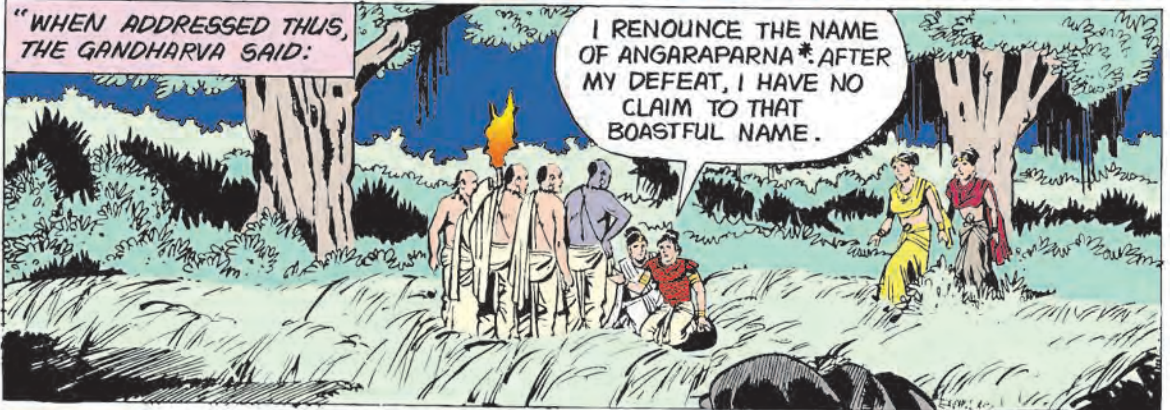
"THEN ARJUNA SAID TO THE GANDHARVA:

YUDHISHTHIRA, THE KING OF THE KURUS, HAS SAVED YOU. GO HENCE WITH YOUR LIFE, ANGARAPARNA.

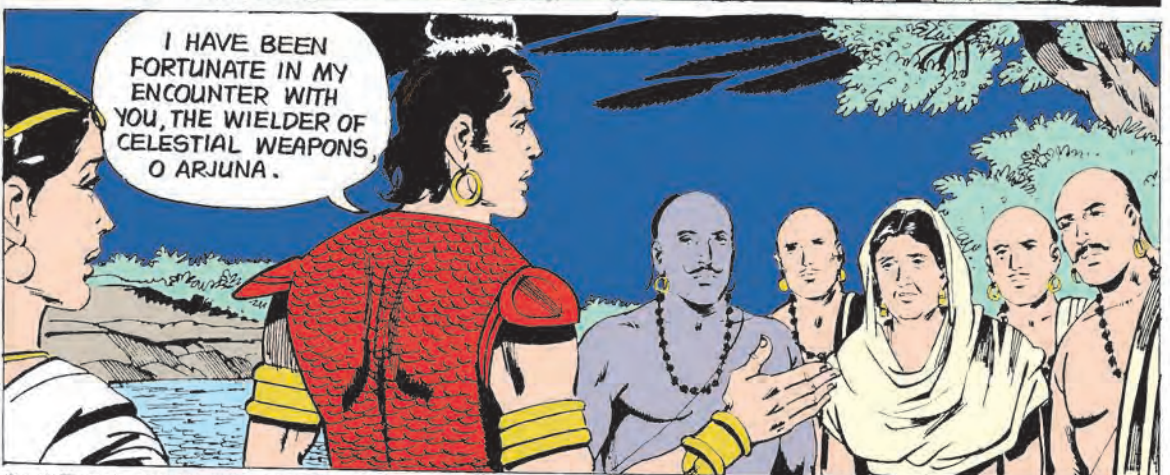


"WHEN ADDRESSED THUS, THE GANDHARVA SAID:

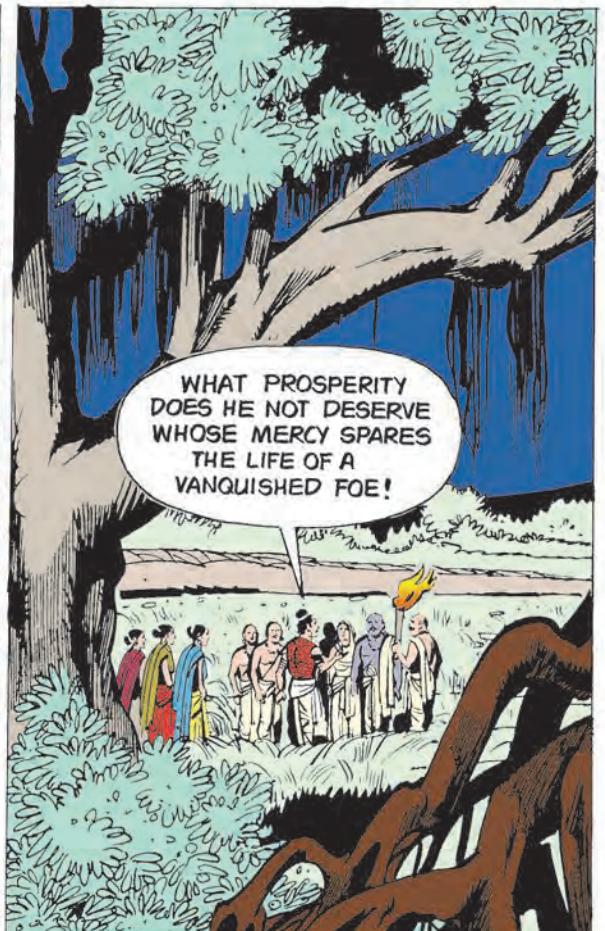
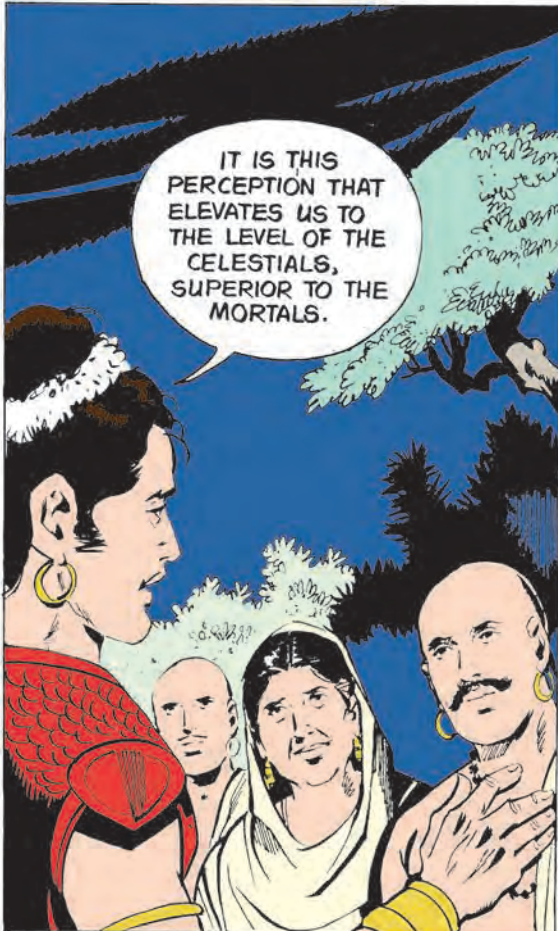
I RENOUNCE THE NAME OF ANGARAPARNA*. AFTER MY DEFEAT, I HAVE NO CLAIM TO THAT BOASTFUL NAME.

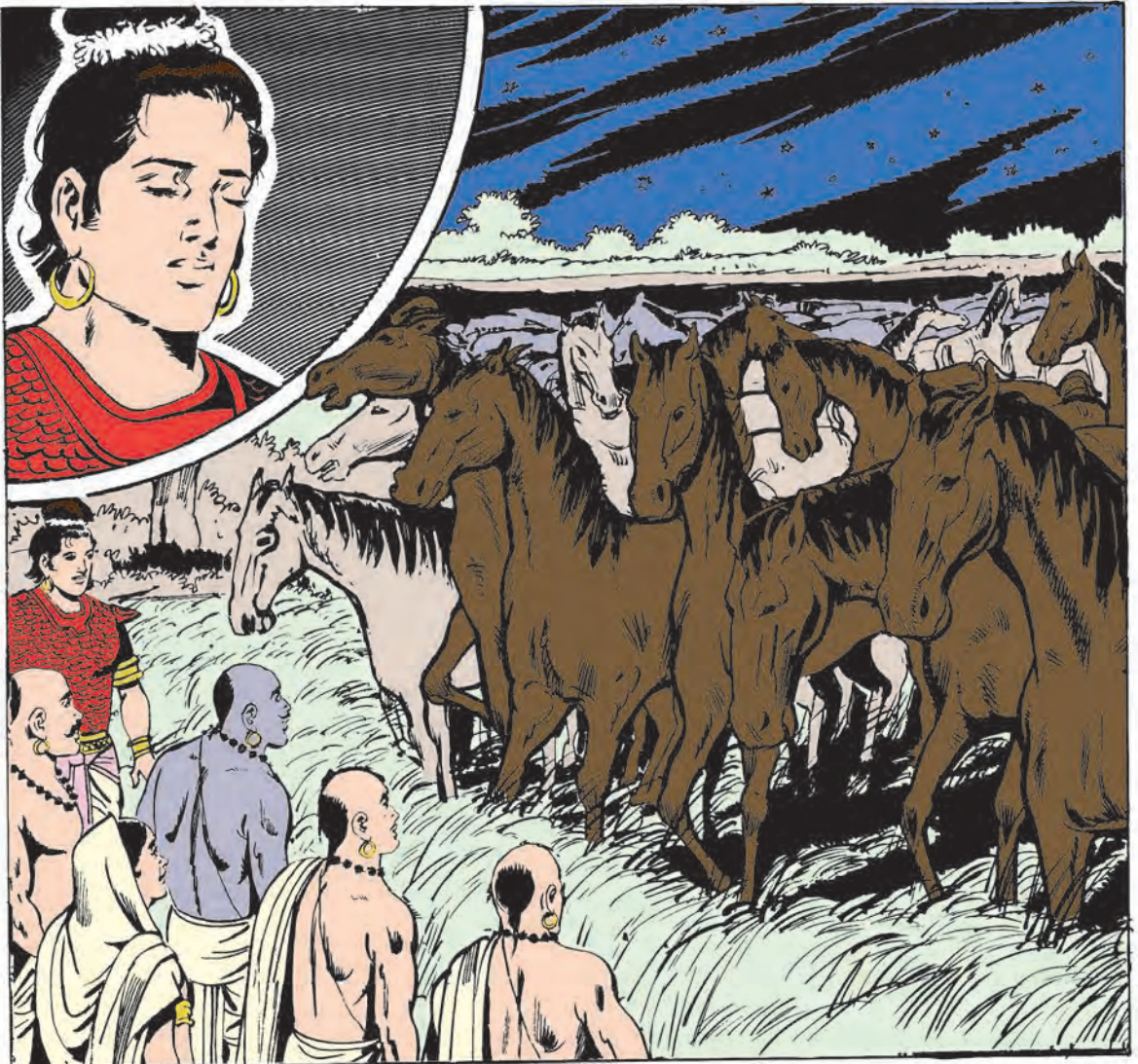
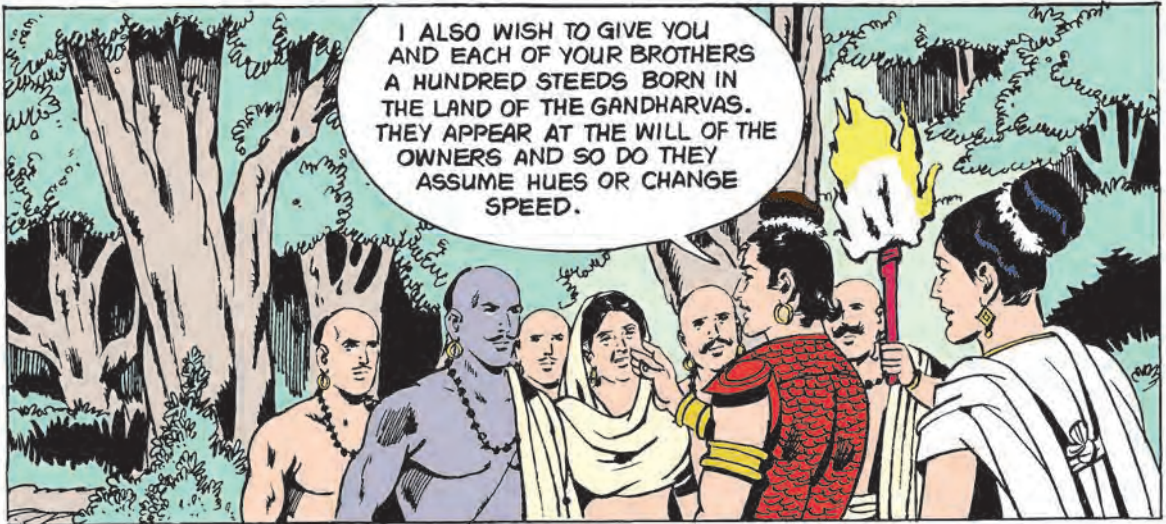


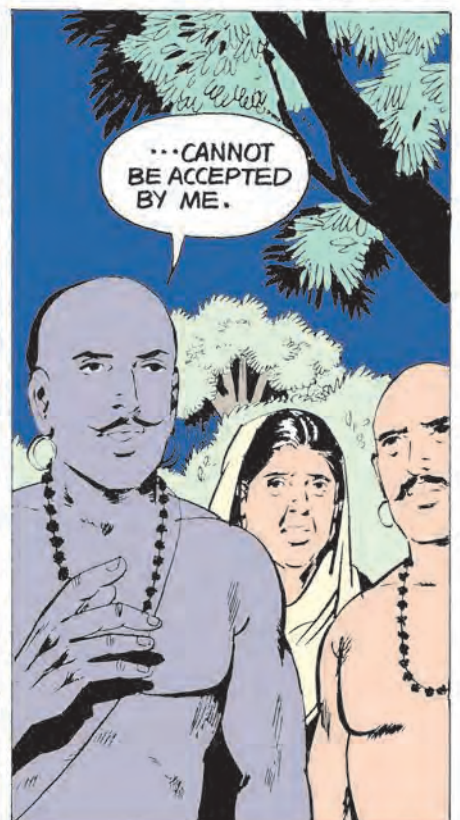
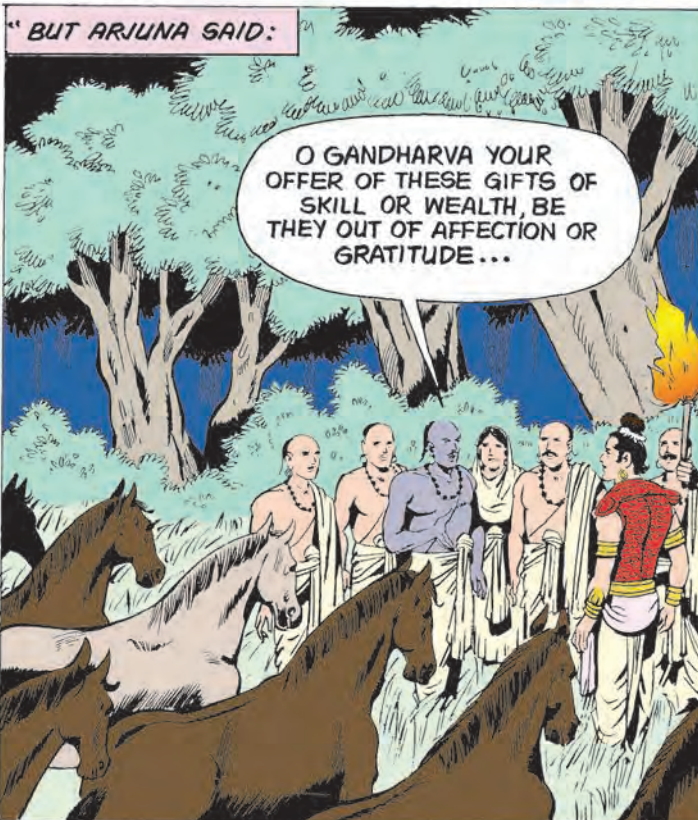
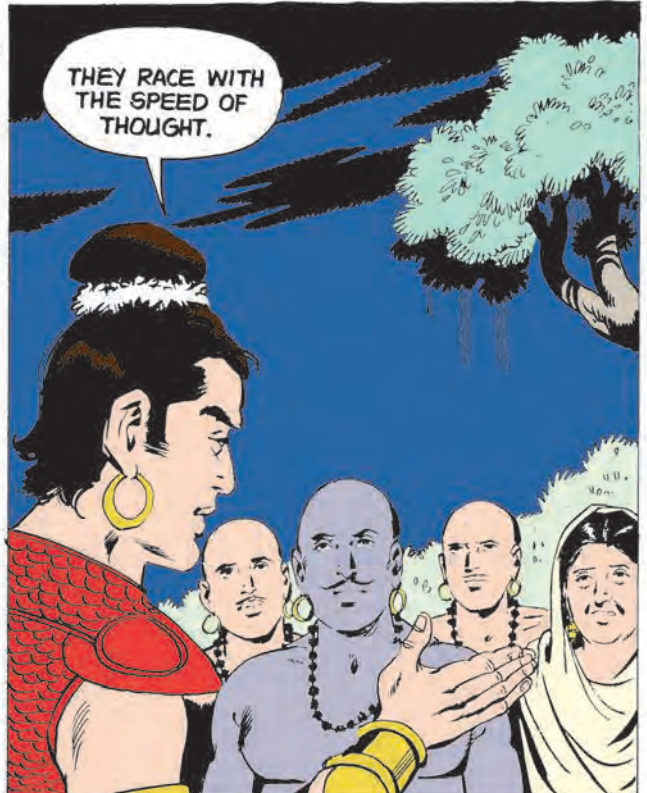
I HAVE BEEN FORTUNATE IN MY ENCOUNTER WITH YOU, THE WIELDER OF CELESTIAL WEAPONS, O ARJUNA.



* THE ONE WITH THE SCORCHING VEHICLE

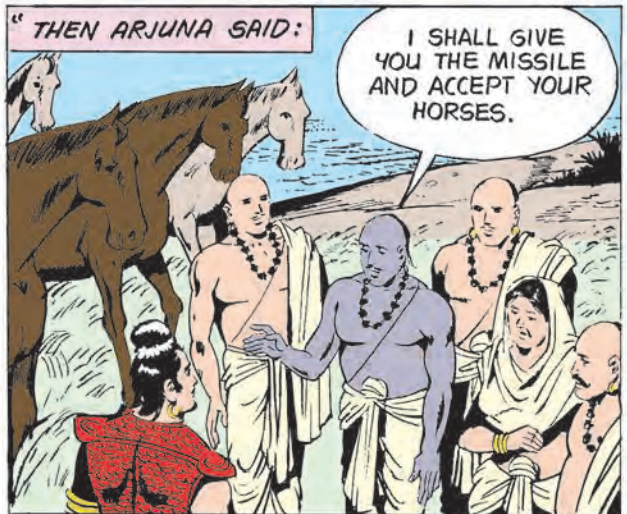
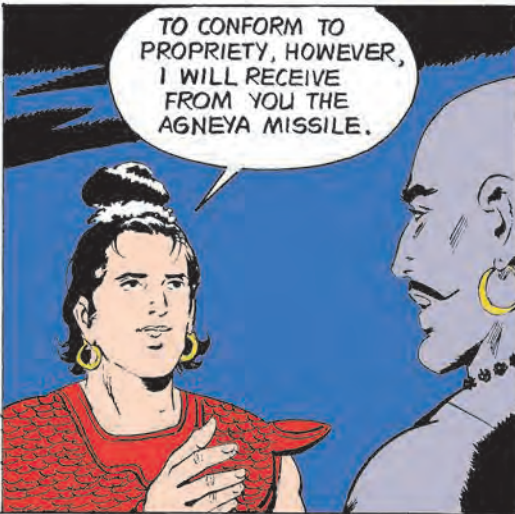


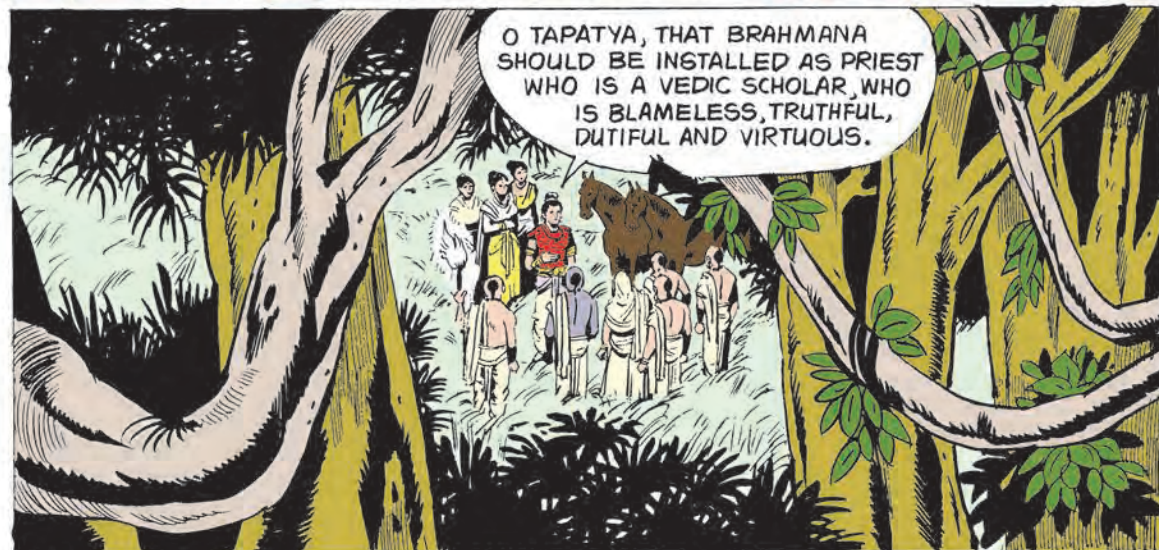
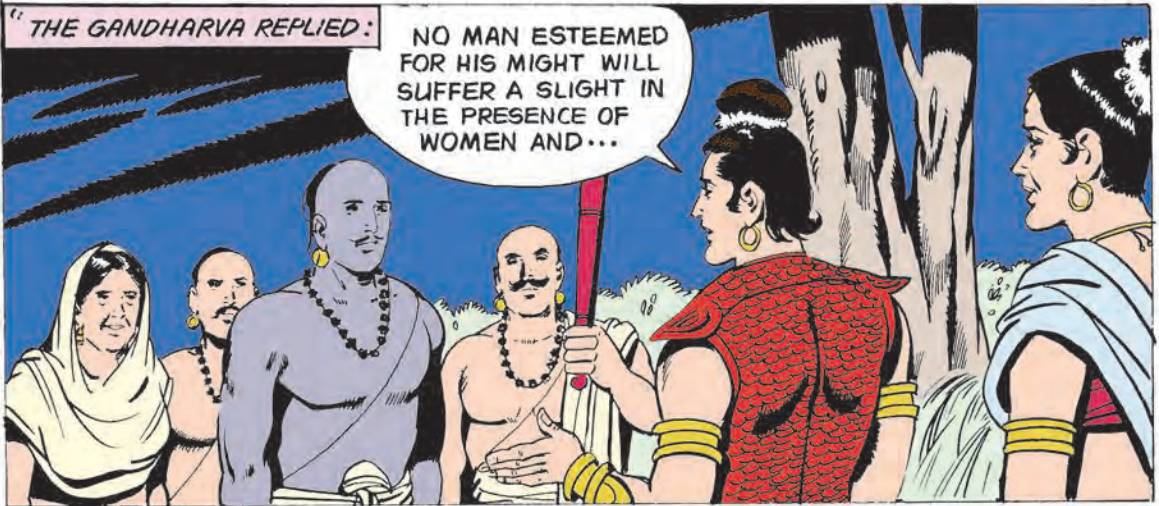


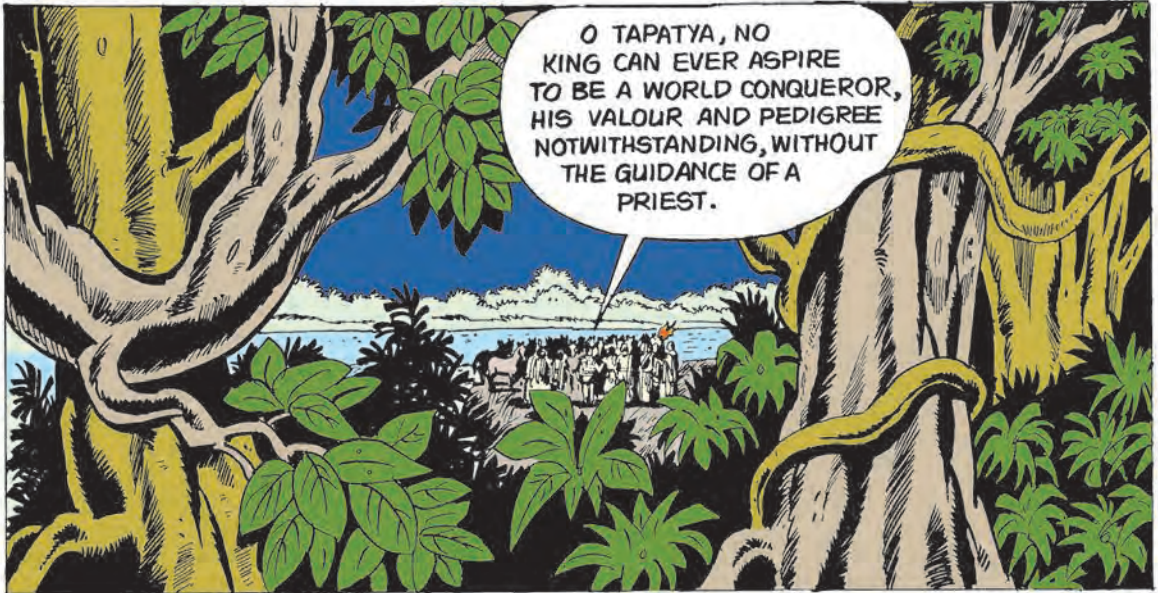


"THE GANDHARVA REPLIED:

A MEETING WITH A GREAT MAN IS ALWAYS A SOURCE OF GREAT JOY. OVERWHELMED BY WHAT YOU HAVE GIVEN ME, I WISH TO GIVE YOU MY SCIENCE.





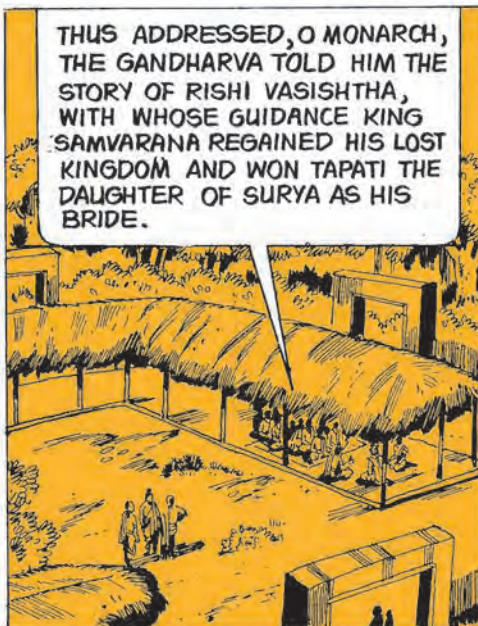


"ARJUNA THEN SAID:

WHY DO YOU, O GANDHARVA, ADDRESS ME AS TAPATYA? AS THE SONS OF KUNTI WE ARE KAUNTEYAS. BUT WHO IS TAPATI TO US?

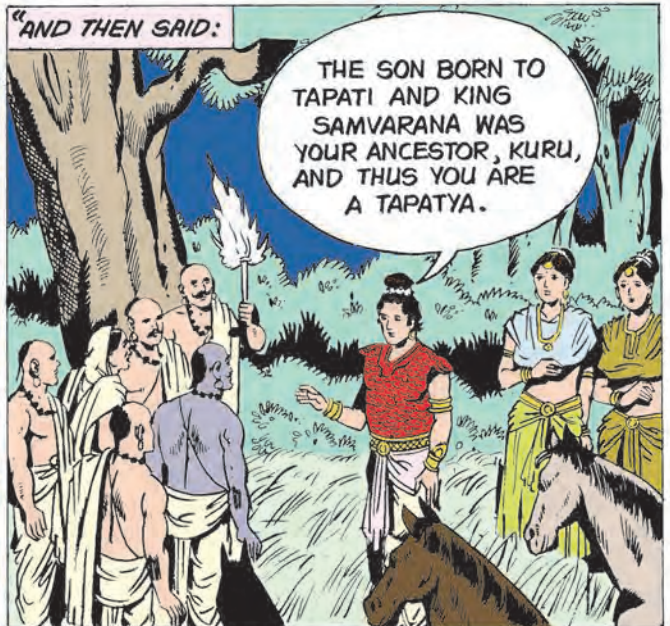


THUS ADDRESSED, O MONARCH, THE GANDHARVA TOLD HIM THE STORY OF RISHI VASISHTHA, WITH WHOSE GUIDANCE KING SAMVARANA REGAINED HIS LOST KINGDOM AND WON TAPATI THE DAUGHTER OF SURYA AS HIS BRIDE.



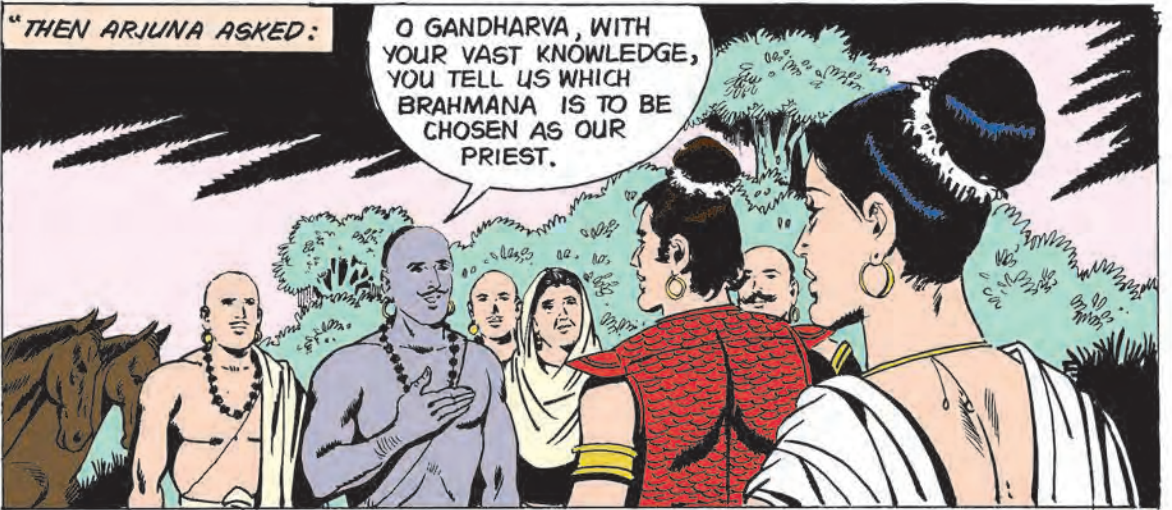
"AND THEN SAID:

THE SON BORN TO TAPATI AND KING SAMVARANA WAS YOUR ANCESTOR, KURU, AND THUS YOU ARE A TAPATYA.



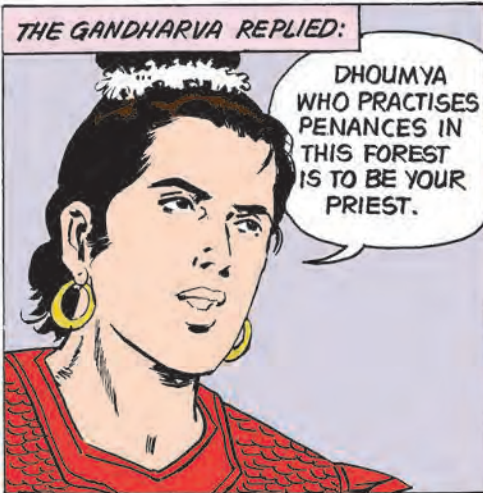
"THEN ARJUNA ASKED:

O GANDHARVA, WITH YOUR VAST KNOWLEDGE, YOU TELL US WHICH BRAHMANA IS TO BE CHOSEN AS OUR PRIEST.

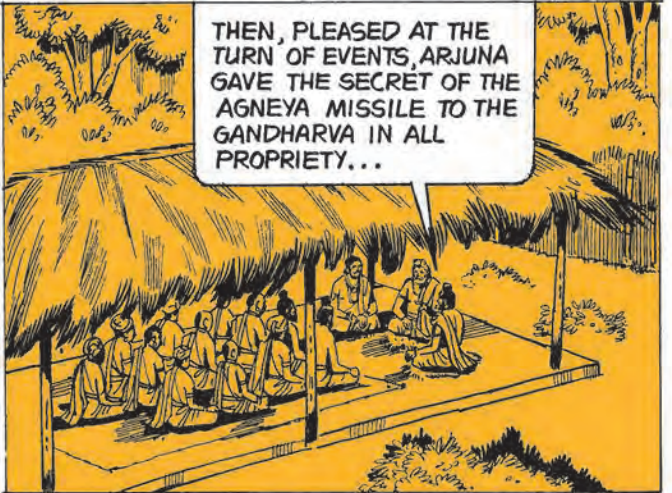


THE GANDHARVA REPLIED:

DHOUMYA WHO PRACTISES PENANCES IN THIS FOREST IS TO BE YOUR PRIEST.

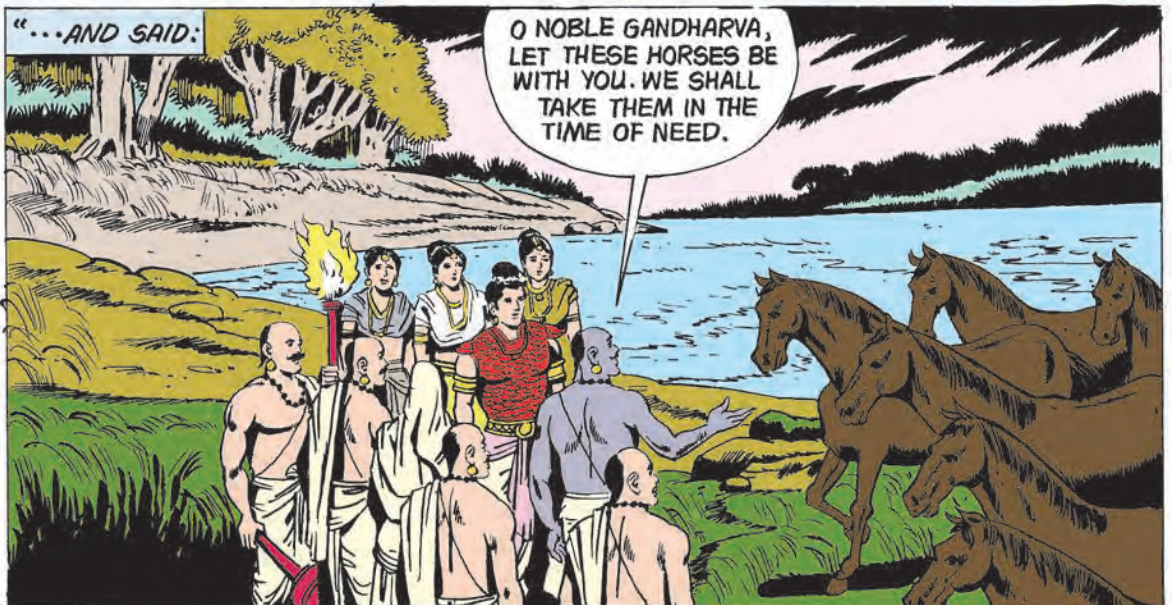


THEN, PLEASED AT THE TURN OF EVENTS, ARJUNA GAVE THE SECRET OF THE AGNEYA MISSILE TO THE GANDHARVA IN ALL PROPRIETY...



"...AND SAID:

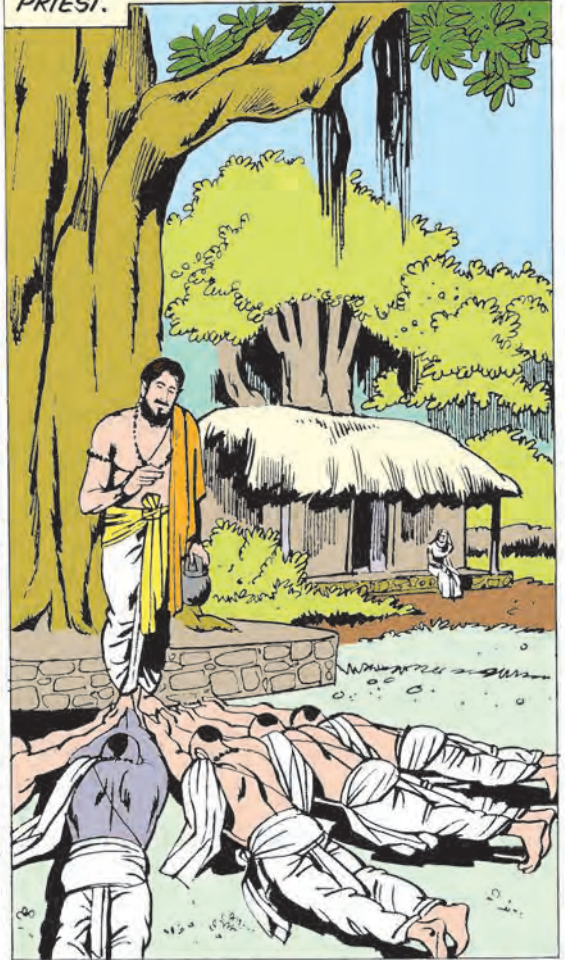
O NOBLE GANDHARVA, LET THESE HORSES BE WITH YOU. WE SHALL TAKE THEM IN THE TIME OF NEED.



"THEN THE PANDAVAS WENT TO THE ASHRAMA OF DHQUMYA WHO WELCOMED THEM WITH WILD FRUITS AND ROOTS..."



"... AND CONSENTED TO BECOME THEIR PRIEST."

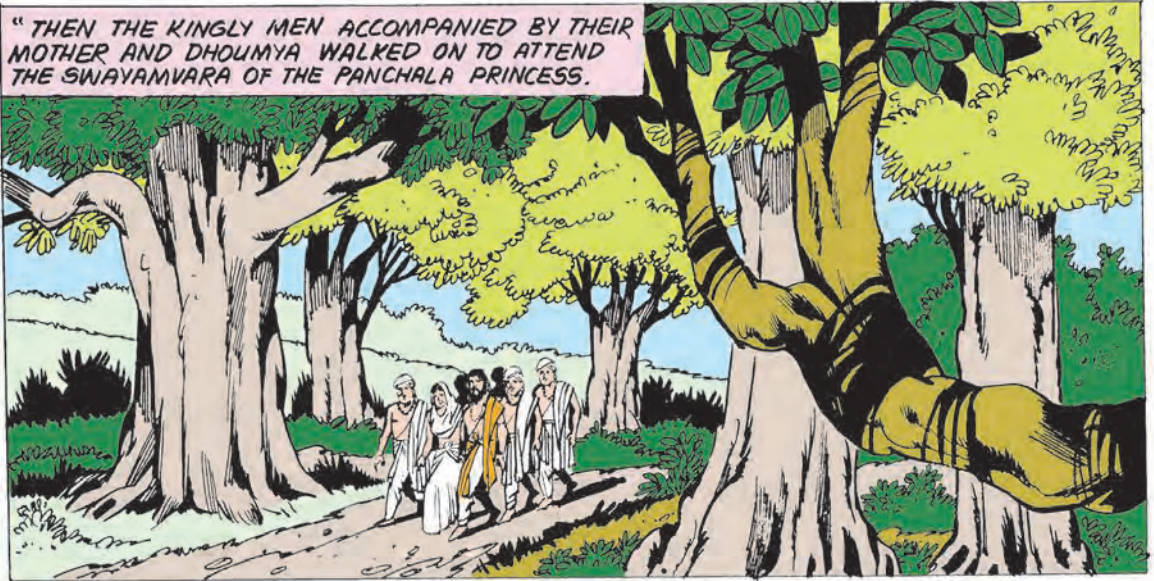


WITH DHQUMYA AS THEIR PRIEST, THE PANDAVAS REGARDED THEIR KINGSHIP AND THEIR KINGDOM AS ALREADY REGAINED, AND THE DAUGHTER OF PANCHALA ALREADY WON IN THE SWAYAMVARA.

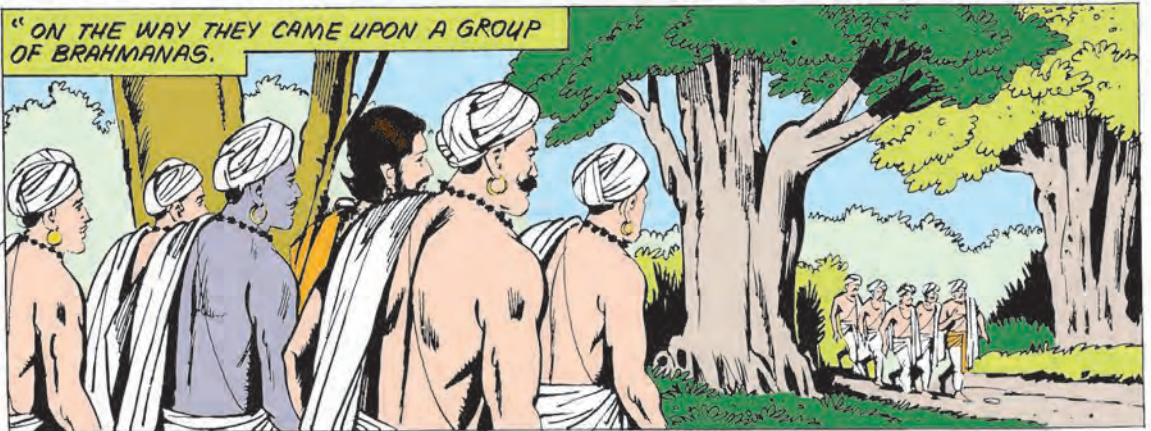
AND THAT BRAHMANA DISCERNING THE INTELLIGENCE, VALOUR AND STEADFASTNESS OF THE SONS OF KUNTI, AKIN TO THAT OF THE IMMORTALS, REGARDED THEM AS ALREADY REINSTATED AS SOVEREIGN KINGS BY THEIR OWN VIRTUES.



"THEN THE KINGLY MEN ACCOMPANIED BY THEIR MOTHER AND DHOUMYA WALKED ON TO ATTEND THE SWAYAMVARA OF THE PANCHALA PRINCESS."



"ON THE WAY THEY CAME UPON A GROUP OF BRAHMANAS."



"AND THOSE BRAHMANAS, BEHOLDING THE PANDAVAS, ASKED THEM:



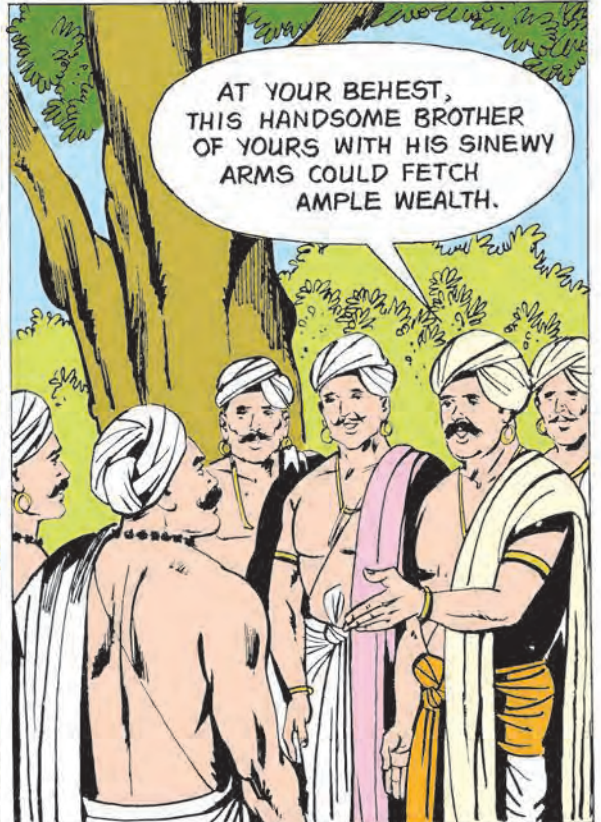
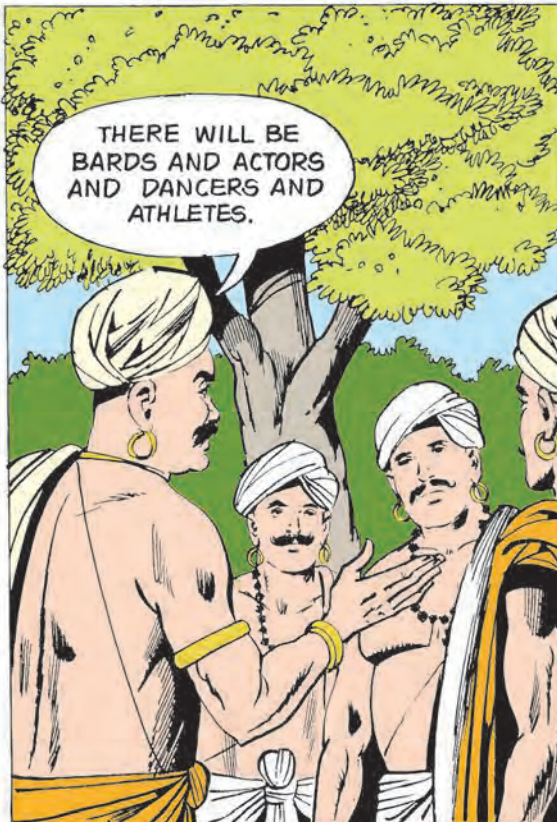
"YUDHISHTHIRA REPLIED:

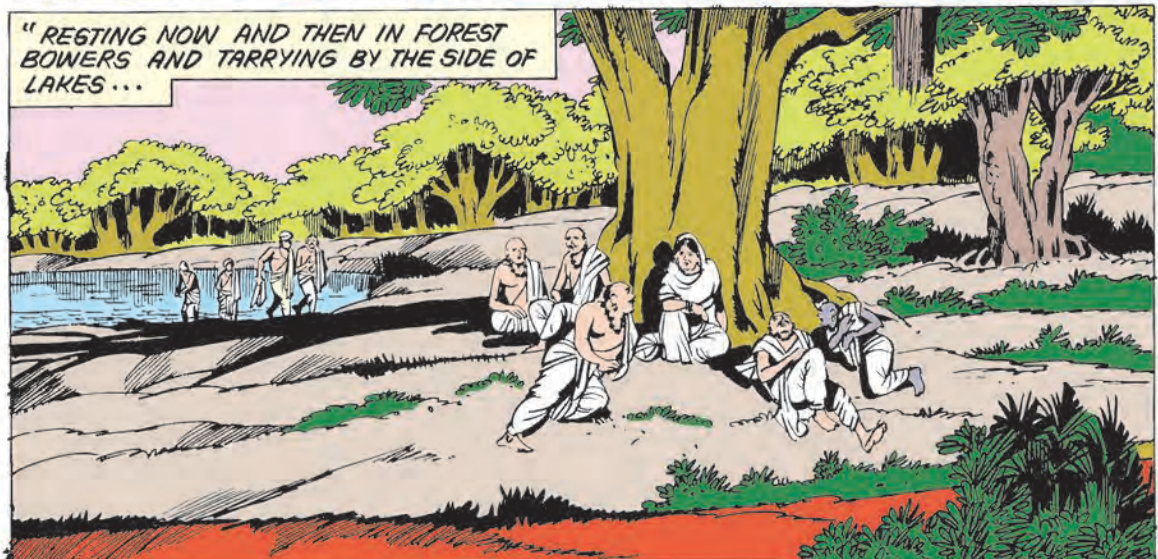
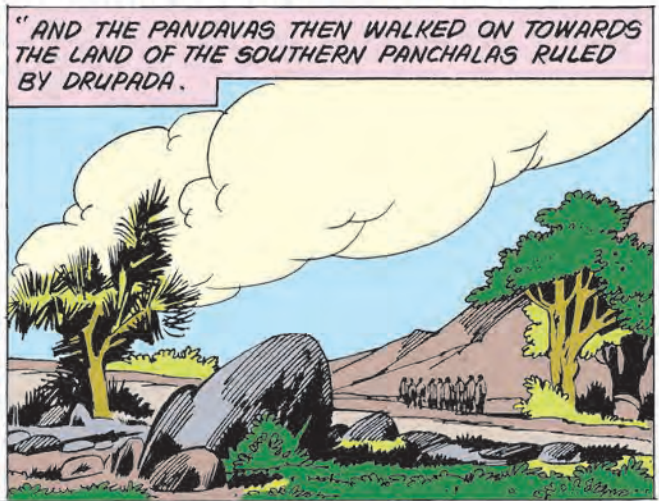
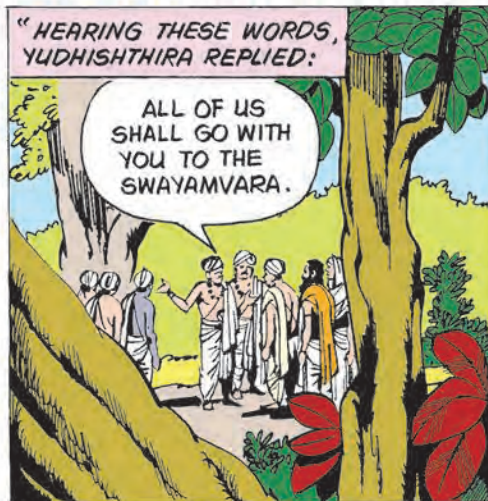
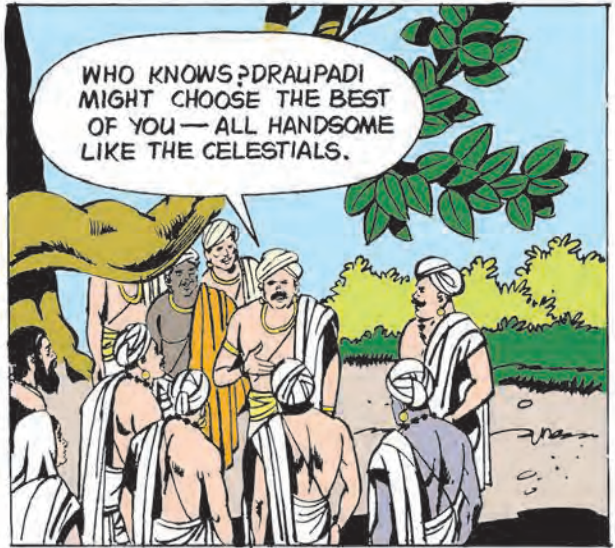
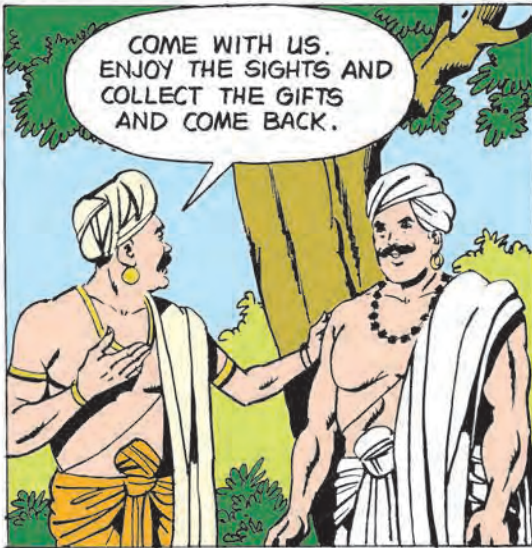


"THE BRAHMANAS THEN SAID:

WE ARE ON OUR WAY TO THE KINGDOM OF THE PANCHALAS WHERE A GRAND SWAYAMVARA IS TO BE HELD.

KINGS AND PRINCES WILL ASSEMBLE FROM FAR AND NEAR FOR THAT EVENT. THOSE MAGNIFICENT MEN EAGER TO WIN THE HAND OF DRUPADA'S DAUGHTER, DRAUPADI, WILL BE LAVISH WITH THEIR DONATIONS OF FOOD AND MONEY.

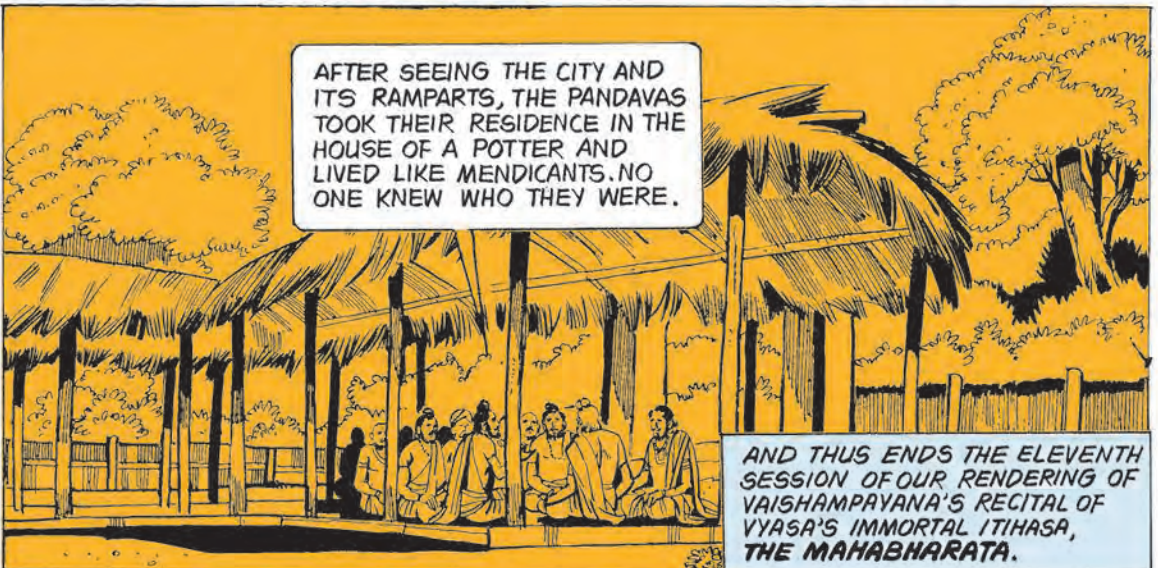




"...THEY FINALLY REACHED THE CITY OF DRUPADA."



AFTER SEEING THE CITY AND ITS RAMPARTS, THE PANDAVAS TOOK THEIR RESIDENCE IN THE HOUSE OF A POTTER AND LIVED LIKE MENDICANTS. NO ONE KNEW WHO THEY WERE.



AND THUS ENDS THE ELEVENTH SESSION OF OUR RENDERING OF VAISHAMPAYANA'S RECITAL OF VYASA'S IMMORTAL ITIHASA, THE MAHABHARATA.

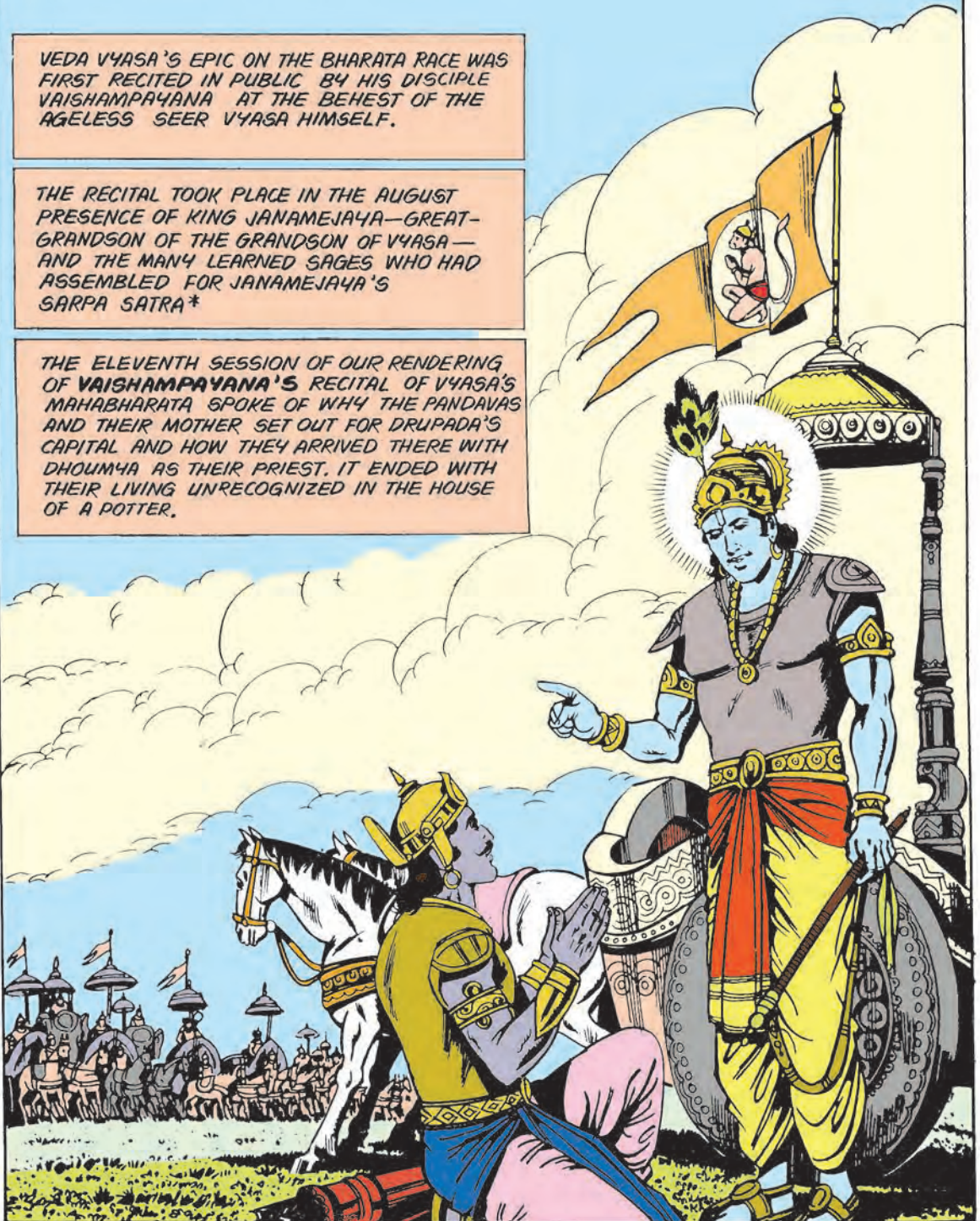
Mahabharata-12

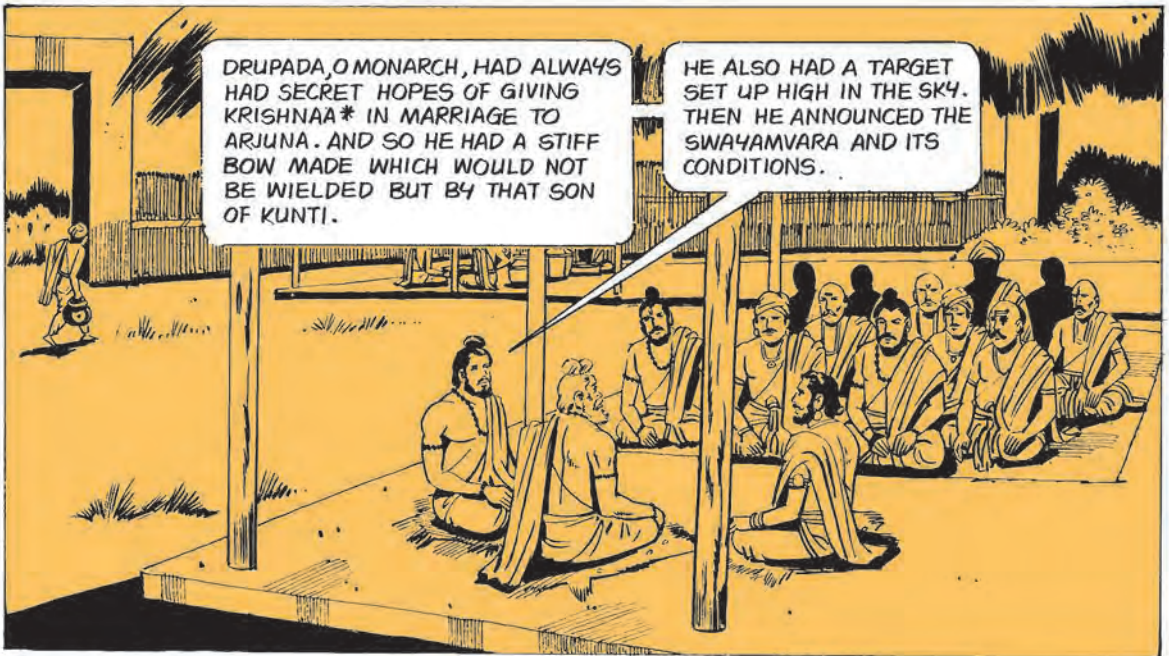
Draupadi's Swayamvara

VEDA VYASA'S EPIC ON THE BHARATA RACE WAS FIRST RECITED IN PUBLIC BY HIS DISCIPLE VAISHAMPAYANA AT THE BEHEST OF THE AGELESS SEER VYASA HIMSELF.

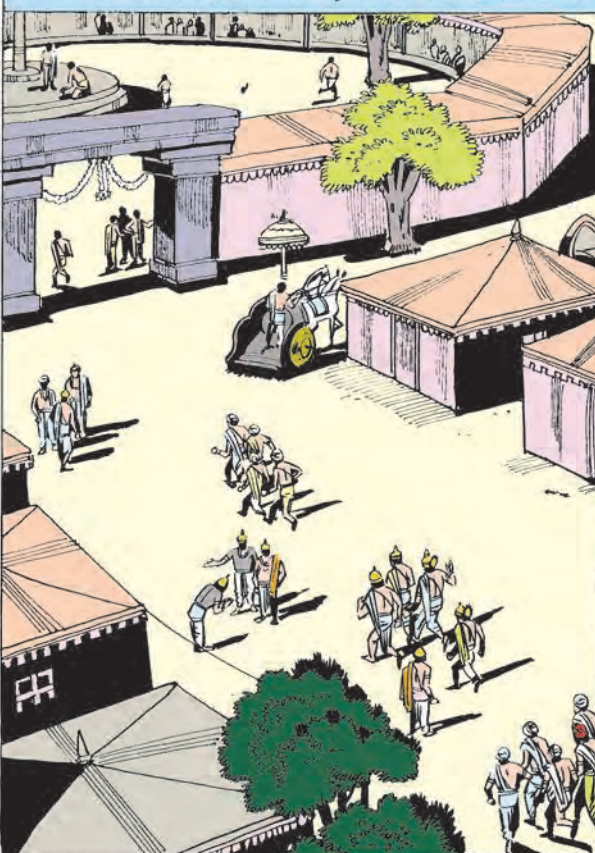
THE RECITAL TOOK PLACE IN THE AUGUST PRESENCE OF KING JANAMEJAYA—GREAT-GRANDSON OF THE GRANDSON OF VYASA—AND THE MANY LEARNED SAGES WHO HAD ASSEMBLED FOR JANAMEJAYA'S SARPA SATRA*

THE ELEVENTH SESSION OF OUR RENDERING OF VAISHAMPAYANA'S RECITAL OF VYASA'S MAHABHARATA SPOKE OF WHY THE PANDAVAS AND THEIR MOTHER SET OUT FOR DRUPADA'S CAPITAL AND HOW THEY ARRIVED THERE WITH DHARMYA AS THEIR PRIEST. IT ENDED WITH THEIR LIVING UNRECOGNIZED IN THE HOUSE OF A POTTER.

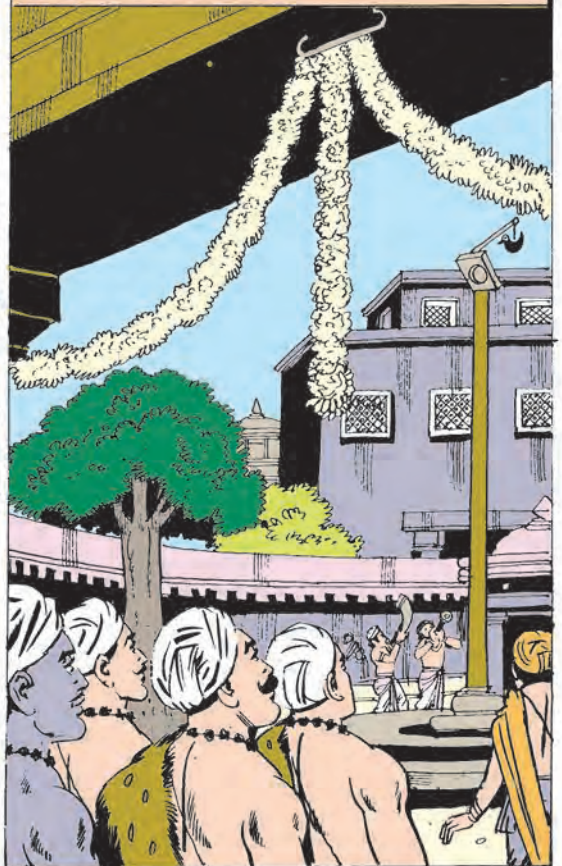




"MANY KINGS HEARING OF IT, CAME THERE AND WERE WELCOMED WITH DUE HONOURS BY DRUPADA. SAGES AND BRAHMANAS, KEEN TO WITNESS THE SPECTACLE, ALSO CAME THERE.



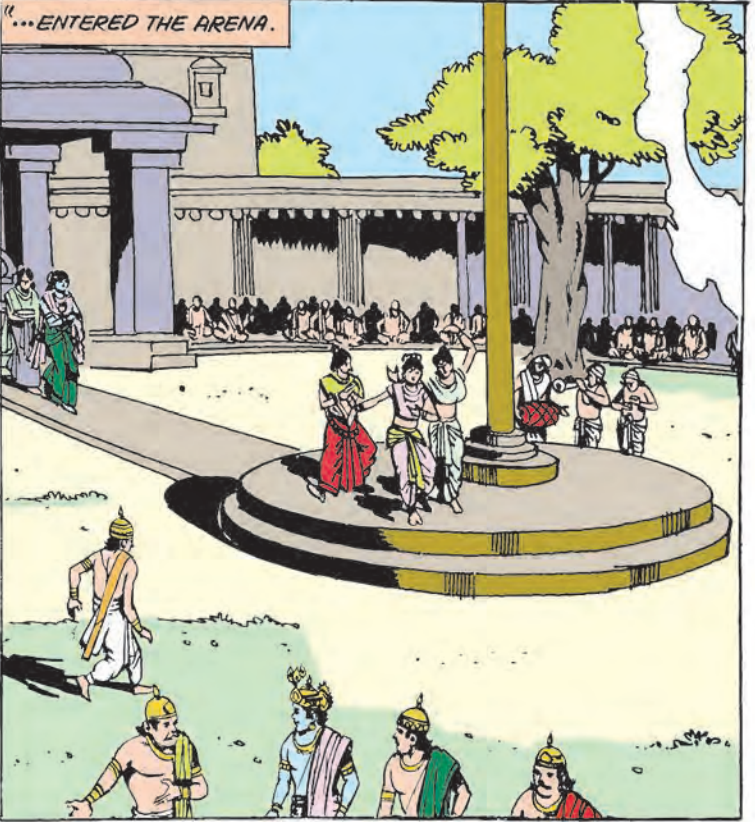
"THE PANDAVAS TOO WENT AND TAKING IN THE UNSURPASSED SPLENDOUR OF THE KING OF THE PANCHALAS...



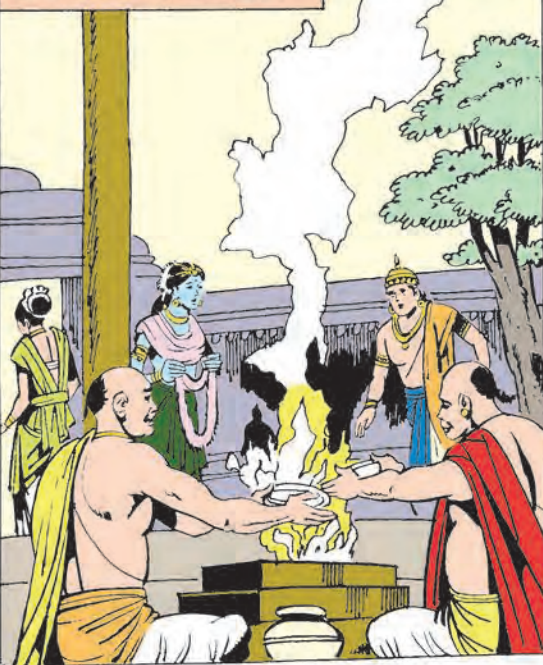
"...TOOK THEIR PLACE AMONG THE BRAHMANAS. THE CONCOURSE OF MEN RECEIVING AMPLE DONATIONS AND WATCHING THE PERFORMING ARTISTES HAD SWELLED DAY BY DAY TILL, ON THE SIXTEENTH DAY, THE DAUGHTER OF DRUPADA, TASTEFULLY DRESSED AND AMPLY BEJEWELLED...



"...ENTERED THE ARENA.



" THEN A PRIEST, PURE IN BODY AND MIND, POURED LIBATIONS OF GHEE AS ORDAINED INTO THE SACRIFICIAL FIRE. HAVING HONOURED AGNI THUS AND WON THE BENEDICTION OF THE BRAHMANAS...



"... HE THEN SILENCED THE MANY INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC PLAYING ALL AROUND. AND WHEN THAT VAST ASSEMBLY...

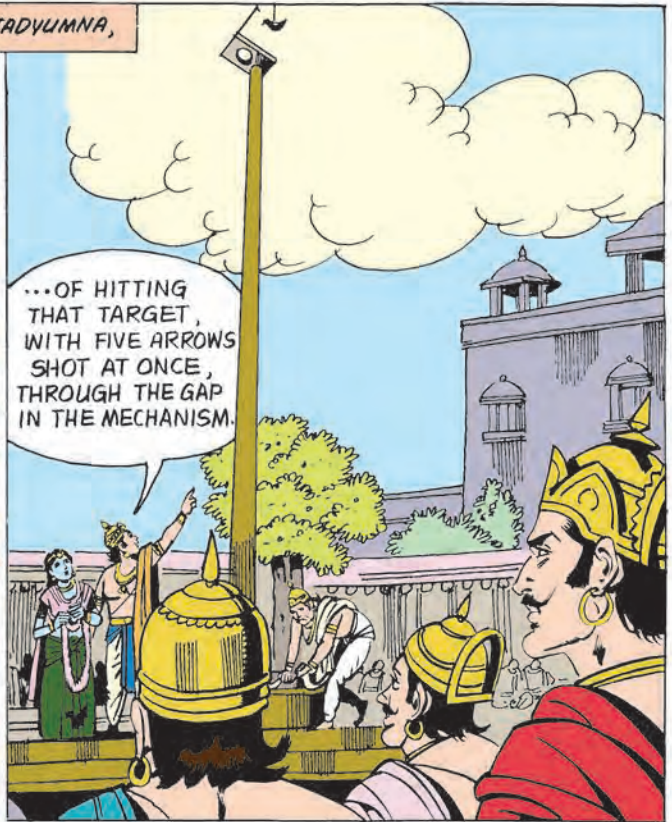


"...BECAME STILL AND SILENT, DHRIŠHTADYUMNA, THE SON OF DRUPADA, SAID:

LISTEN TO ME, O KINGS. MY SISTER DRAUPADI SHALL BECOME HIS WIFE WHO, DISTINGUISHED BY BIRTH LOOKS AND STRENGTH, CAN ACHIEVE THE FEAT...



...OF HITTING THAT TARGET, WITH FIVE ARROWS SHOT AT ONCE, THROUGH THE GAP IN THE MECHANISM.

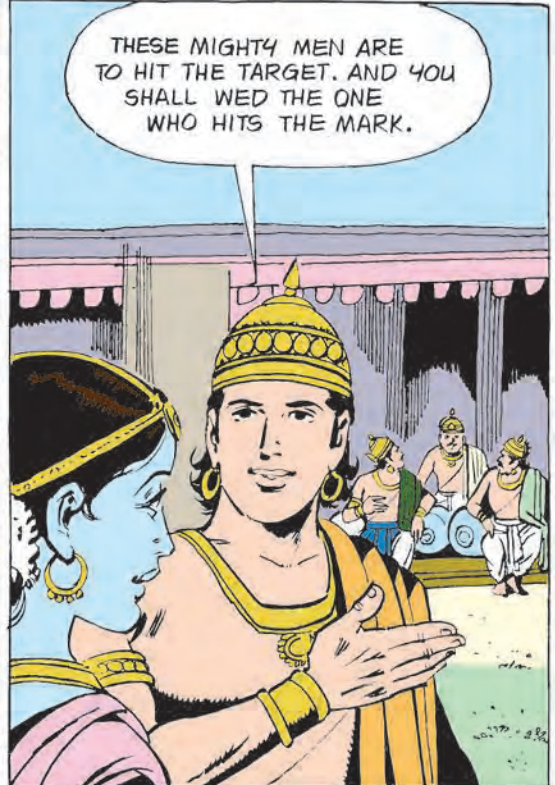


"DHRIŠHTADYUMNA THEN ADDRESSED HIS SISTER THUS:

DURYODHANA, KURUITSU AND OTHER MIGHTY SONS OF DHRIŠTARASHTRA, KARNA, SHAKUNI, SHALYA, BALARAMA, KRISHNA, JAYADRATHA, SHISHUPALA, JARASANDHA AND MANY OTHER RENOWNED KSHATRIYAS HAVE ALL COME HERE FOR YOUR HAND.

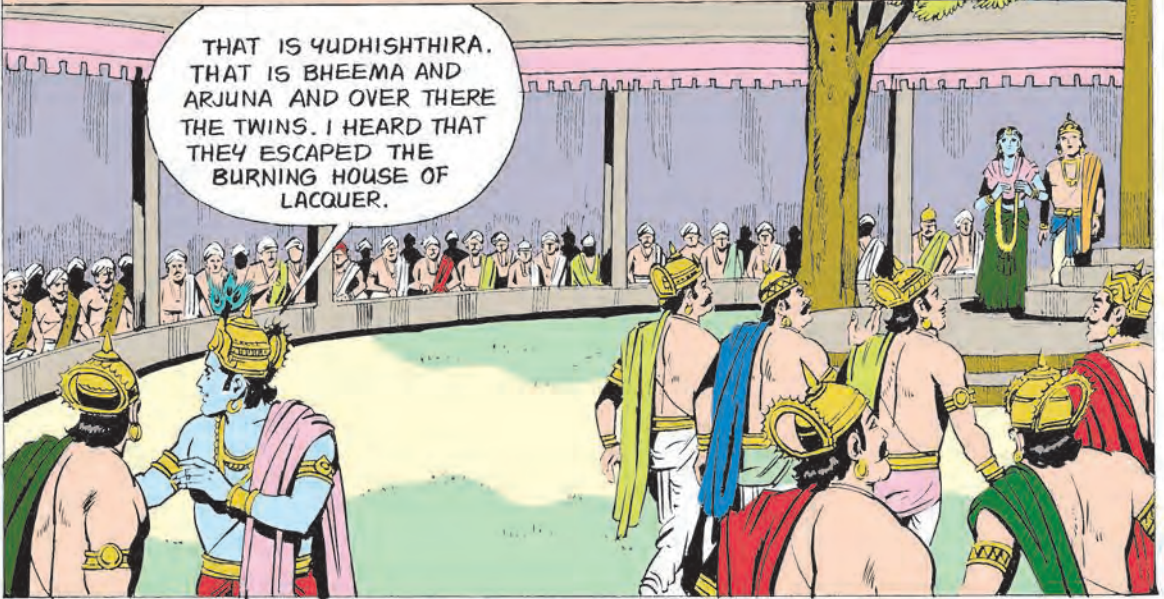


THESE MIGHTY MEN ARE TO HIT THE TARGET. AND YOU SHALL WED THE ONE WHO HITS THE MARK.

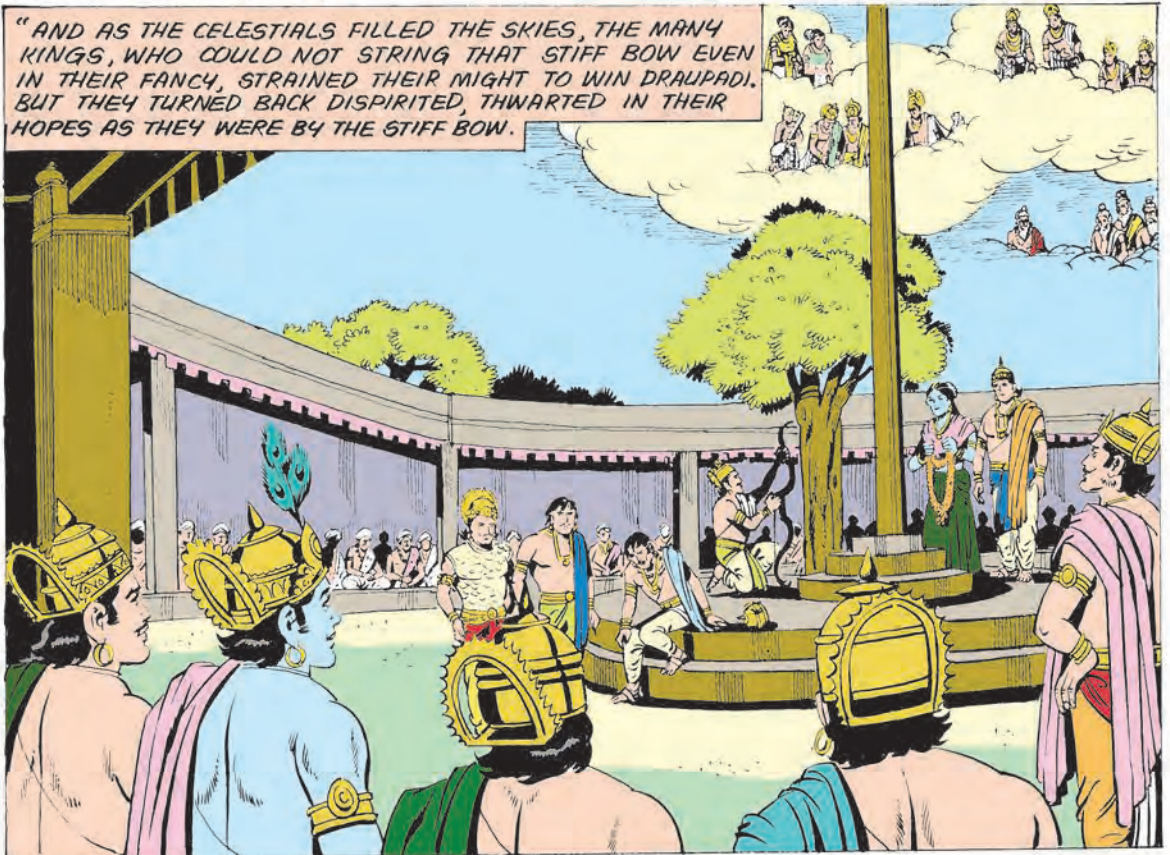


"THEN THOSE KINGS, EACH VAIN OF HIS OWN PROWESS AND JEALOUS OF THE OTHERS, ALL SMITTEN BY THE DARTS OF KAMADEVA, ENTERED THE ARENA. AS THEY HAD EYES ONLY FOR DRAUPADI THEY DID NOT NOTICE THE PANDAVAS. KRISHNA THE YADAVA, HOWEVER, NOTICED THE FIVE BRAHMANAS DISTRAUGHT BY KAMADEVA'S SHAFTS AT THE SIGHT OF DRAUPADI. HE REFLECTED FOR A WHILE AND SAID TO BALARAMA:

THAT IS YUDHISHTHIRA.
THAT IS BHEEMA AND
ARJUNA AND OVER THERE
THE TWINS. I HEARD THAT
THEY ESCAPED THE
BURNING HOUSE OF
LACQUER.



"AND AS THE CELESTIALS FILLED THE SKIES, THE MANY KINGS, WHO COULD NOT STRING THAT STIFF BOW EVEN IN THEIR FANCY, STRAINED THEIR MIGHT TO WIN DRAUPADI. BUT THEY TURNED BACK DISPIRITED, THWARTED IN THEIR HOPES AS THEY WERE BY THE STIFF BOW.



"AND THEN, BEHOLDING THEIR PLIGHT, KARNA PICKED UP THE BOW..."

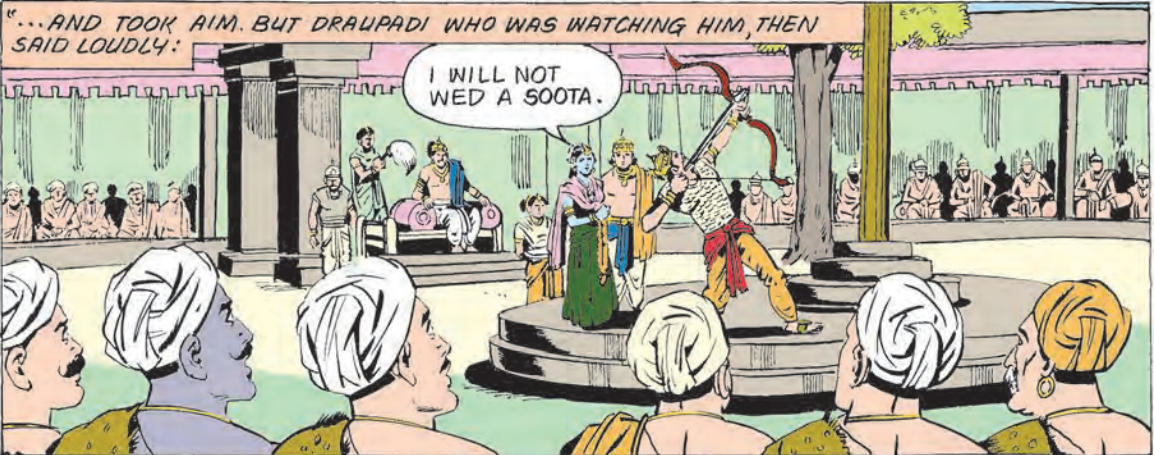


"...STRUNG IT WITH EASE, PICKED UP THE FIVE ARROWS..."



"...AND TOOK AIM. BUT DRAUPADI WHO WAS WATCHING HIM, THEN SAID LOUDLY:"

I WILL NOT WED A SOOTA.



"KARNA SHOT A GLANCE AT THE SUN..."



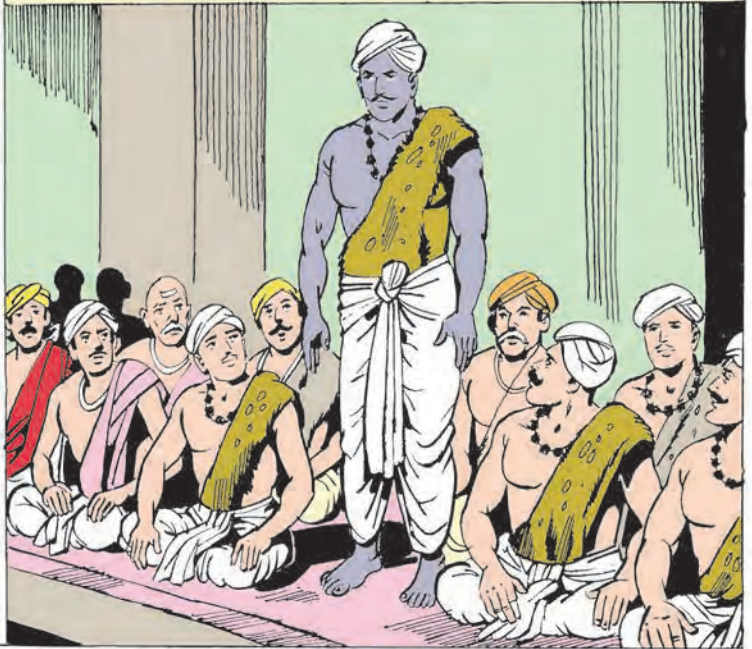
"...AND THREW DOWN THE BOW WITH AN ANGRY LAUGH."



THEN SHISHUPALA THE KING OF THE CHEDIS, AND MIGHTY KING JARASANDHA AND SHALYA THE KING OF MADRA ALL TRIED, O MONARCH, BUT FAILED. AND JARASANDHA LEFT FORTHWITH FOR HIS KINGDOM.



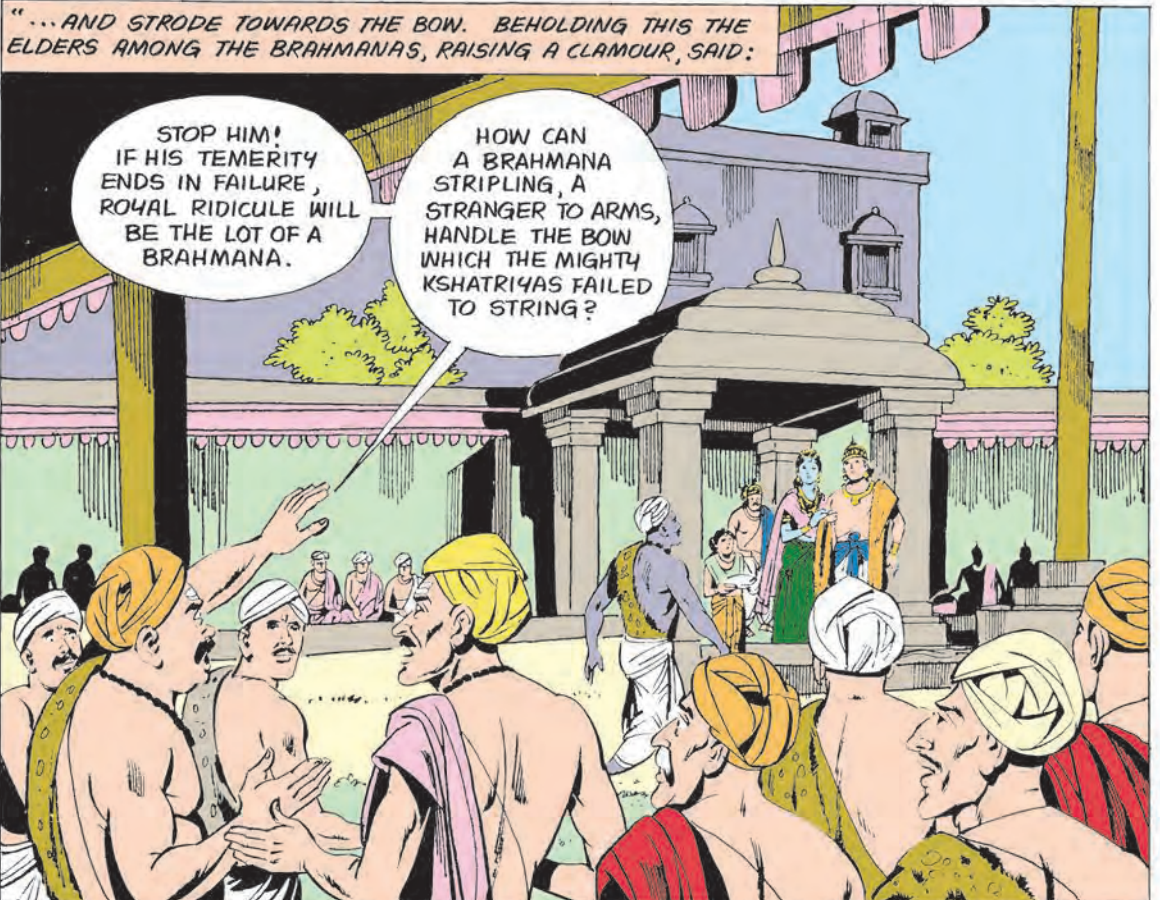
"WHEN ALL THE KINGS AND THE PRINCES WITHDREW, ARJUNA STOOD UP AMONG THE BRAHMANAS...

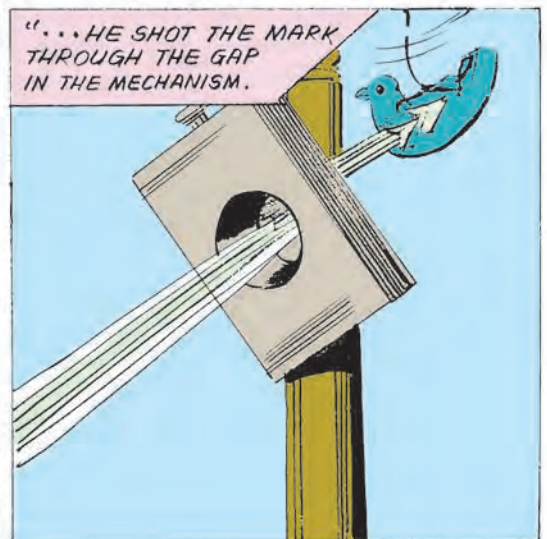
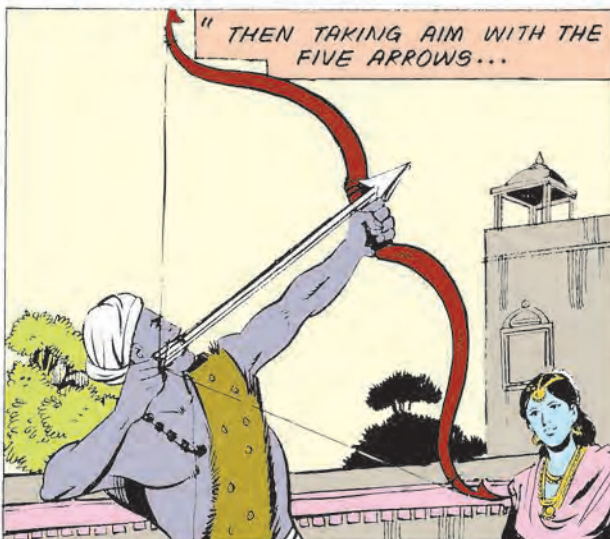


"...AND STRODE TOWARDS THE BOW. BEHOLDING THIS THE ELDERS AMONG THE BRAHMANAS, RAISING A CLAMOUR, SAID:

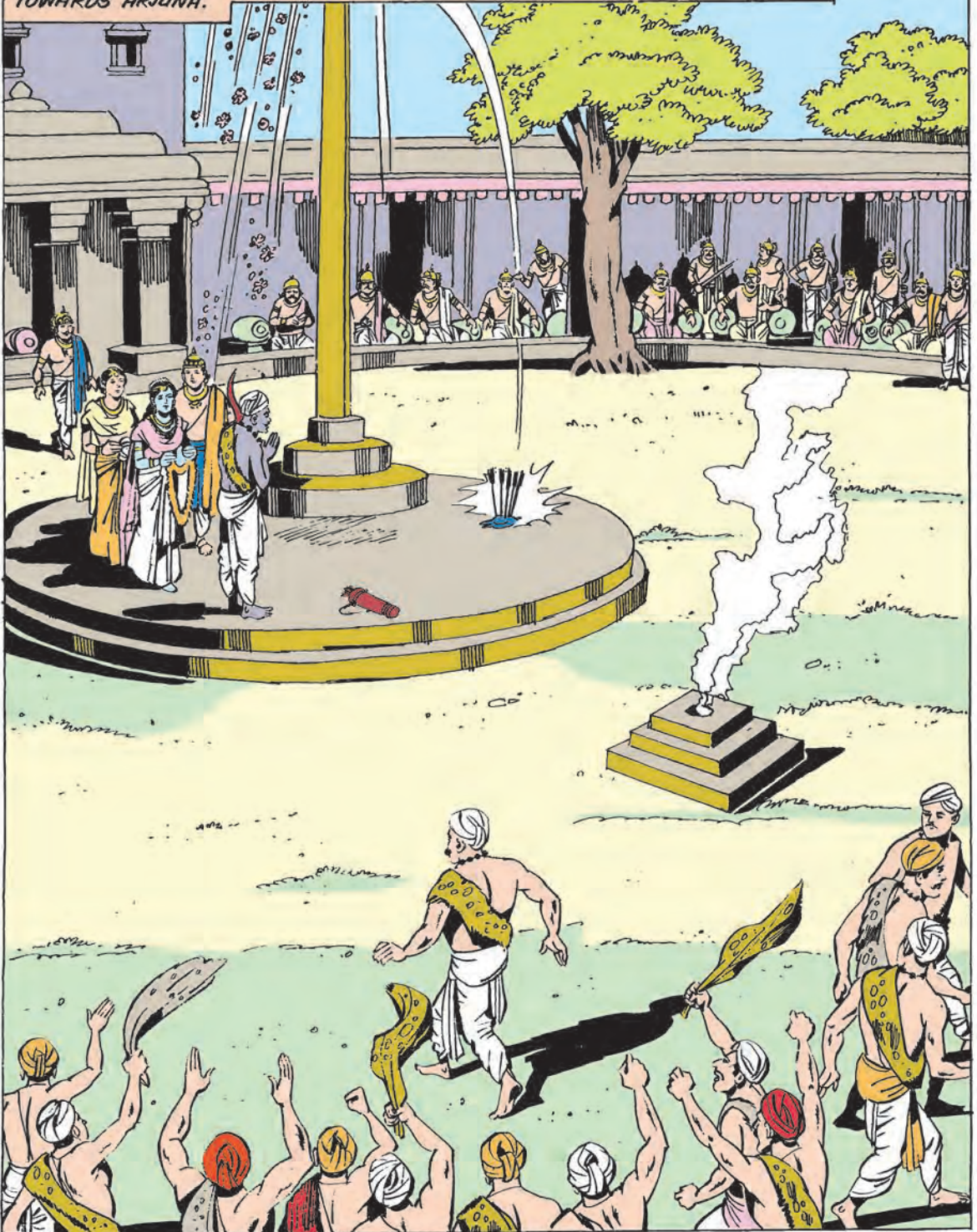
STOP HIM!
IF HIS TEMERITY
ENDS IN FAILURE,
ROYAL RIDICULE WILL
BE THE LOT OF A
BRAHMANA.

HOW CAN
A BRAHMANA
STRIPLING, A
STRANGER TO ARMS,
HANDLE THE BOW
WHICH THE MIGHTY
KSHATRIYAS FAILED
TO STRING?





"...AND BROUGHT IT FALLING TO THE GROUND. THEN, O MONARCH, SOUNDS FROM THE SKIES AND THE EARTH RENT THE AIR. THE CELESTIALS SHOWERED FLOWERS ON ARJUNA. THE BRAHMANAS WAVED THEIR DEERSKINS IN JOY. THE KINGS AND PRINCES UTTERED CRIES OF WOE. AS THE DIN SWELLED UP, YUDHISHTHIRA AND THE TWINS LEFT THE SCENE AND DRUPADI TURNED HER STEPS TOWARDS ARJUNA.

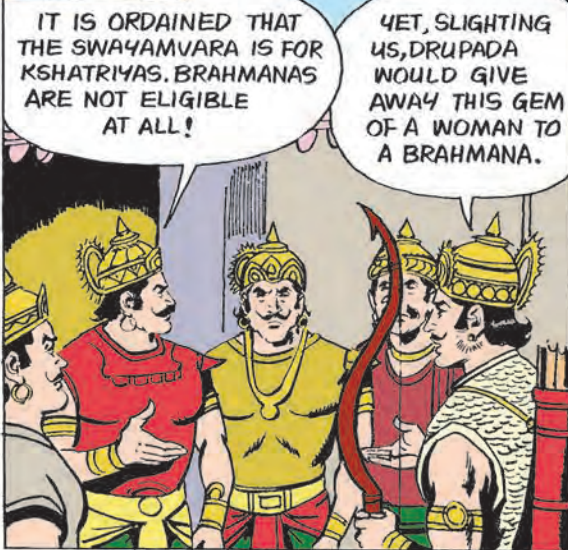


"THEN THE SHOCK OF THE KINGS AND PRINCES GRADUALLY TURNED INTO ANGER AND THEY SAID:

IT IS ORDAINED THAT THE SWAYAMVARA IS FOR KSHATRIYAS. BRAHMANAS ARE NOT ELIGIBLE AT ALL!

YET, SLIGHTING US, DRUPADA WOULD GIVE AWAY THIS GEM OF A WOMAN TO A BRAHMANA.

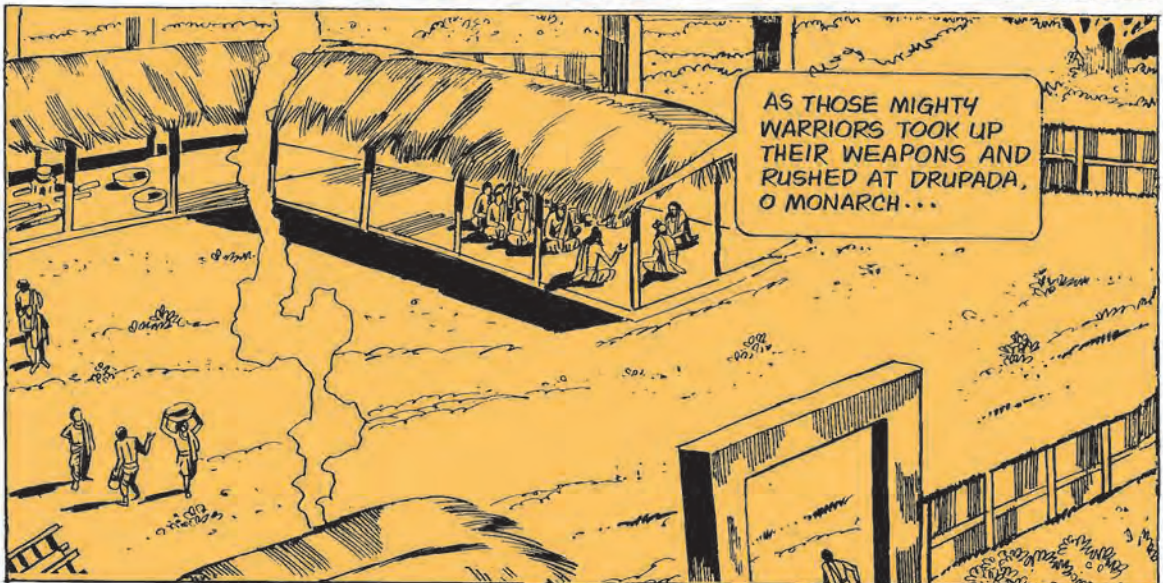
WE MUST ENSURE THAT NO SUCH HUMILIATING SWAYAMVARA WILL BE HELD HENCEFORTH!

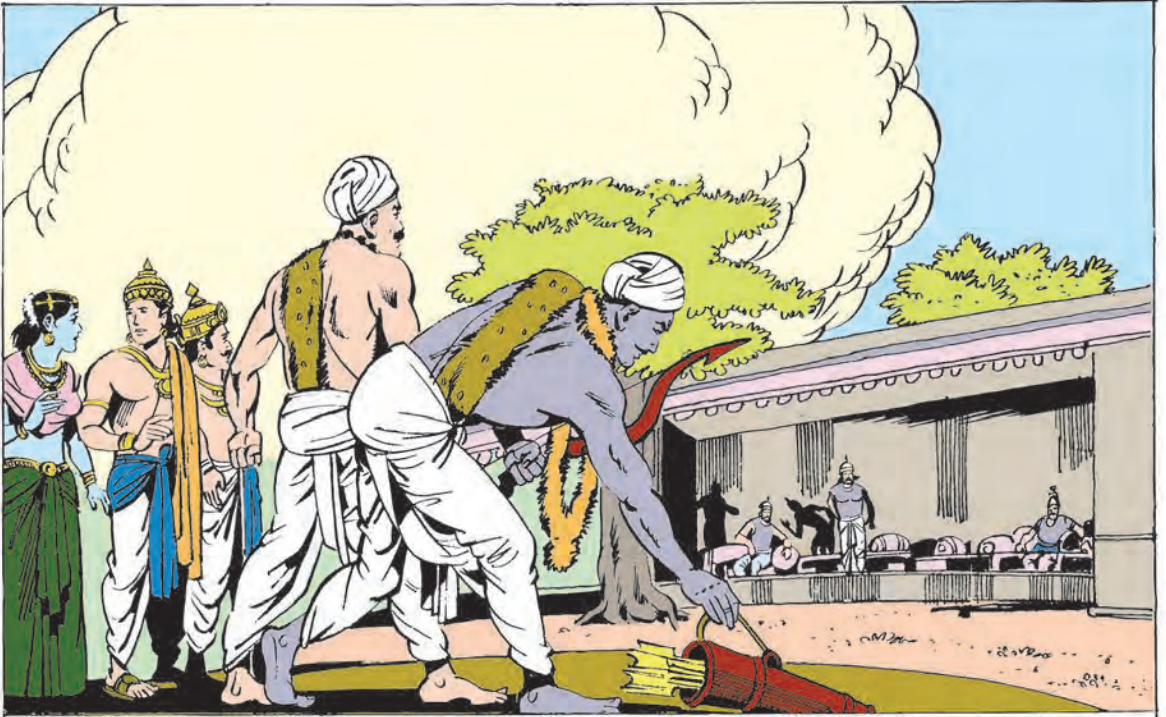


WE CANNOT SLAY A BRAHMANA. SO LET US SLAY THIS TREACHEROUS KING AND HIS SON AND CAST HIS DAUGHTER INTO THE FIRE BEFORE WE RETURN TO OUR KINGDOM.

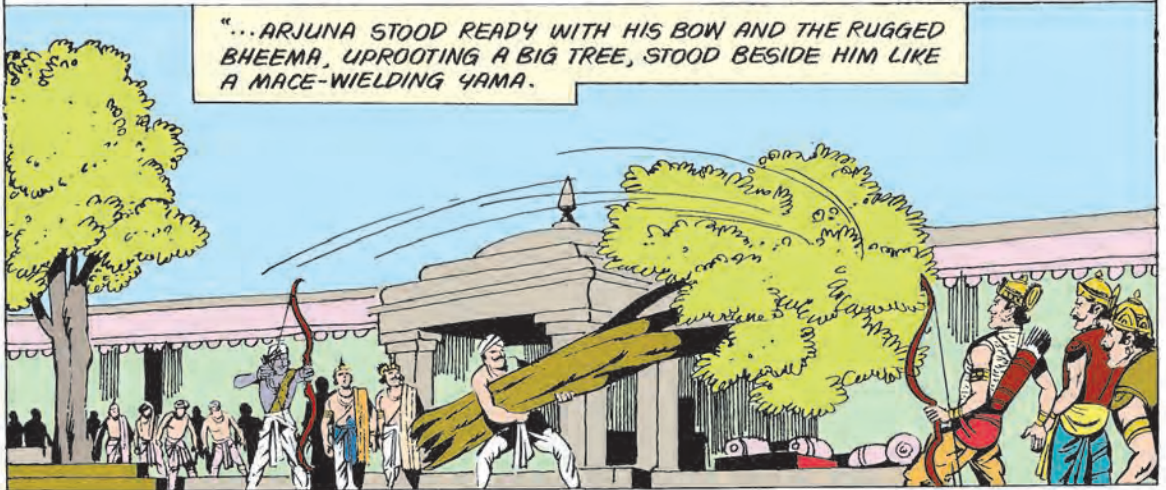


AS THOSE MIGHTY WARRIORS TOOK UP THEIR WEAPONS AND RUSHED AT DRUPADA, O MONARCH...





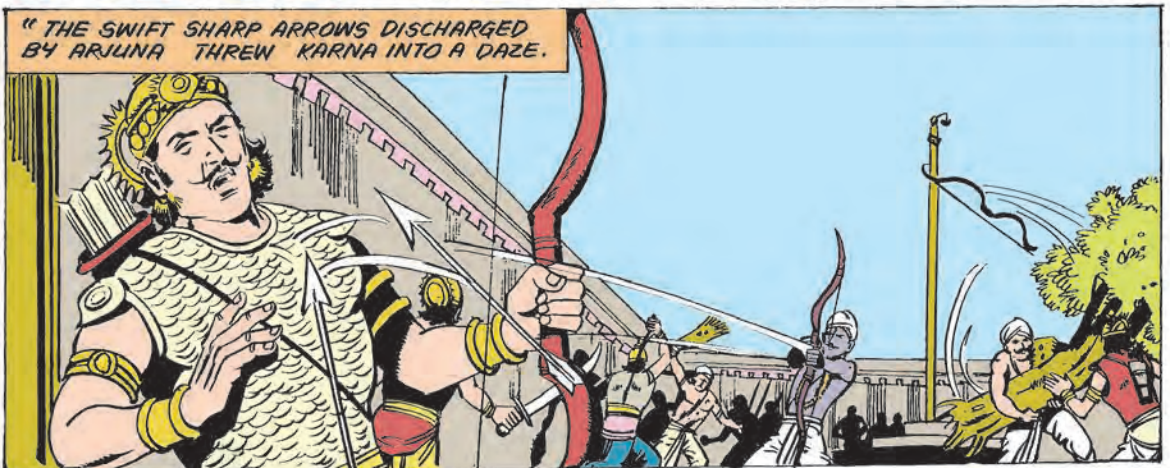
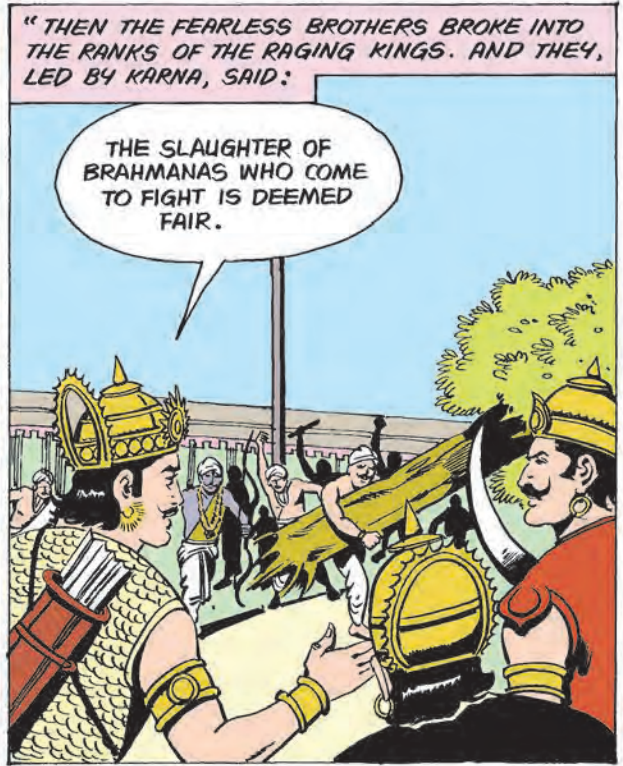
"...ARJUNA STOOD READY WITH HIS BOW AND THE RUGGED BHEEMA, UPROOTING A BIG TREE, STOOD BESIDE HIM LIKE A MACE-WIELDING YAMA.



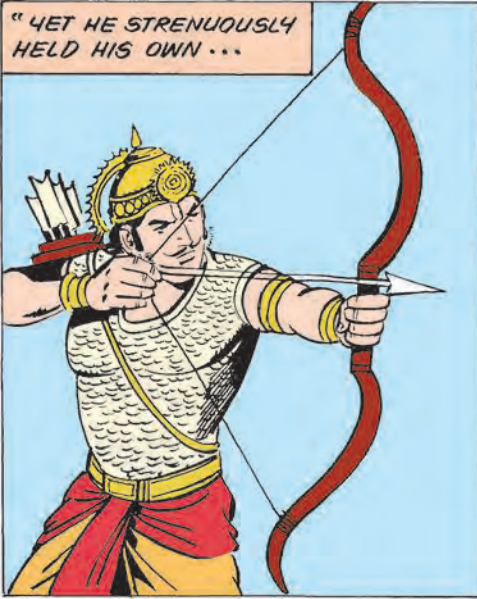
"AND THE BRAHMANAS BRANDISHING THEIR SACRED VESSELS SAID:

BE NOT AFRAID!
WE SHALL FIGHT
THE KINGS.

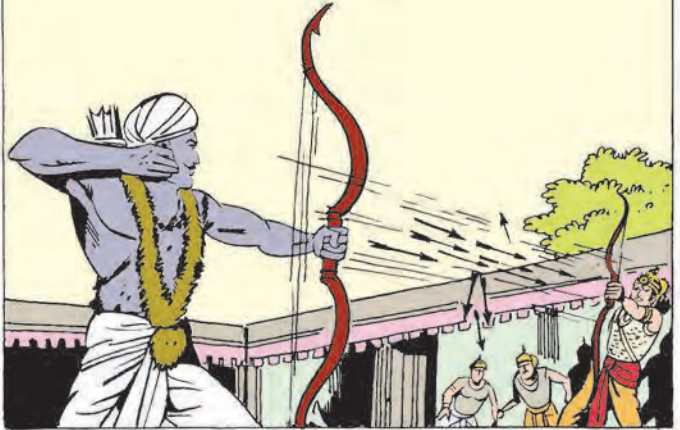




"YET HE STRENUOUSLY
HELD HIS OWN ..."



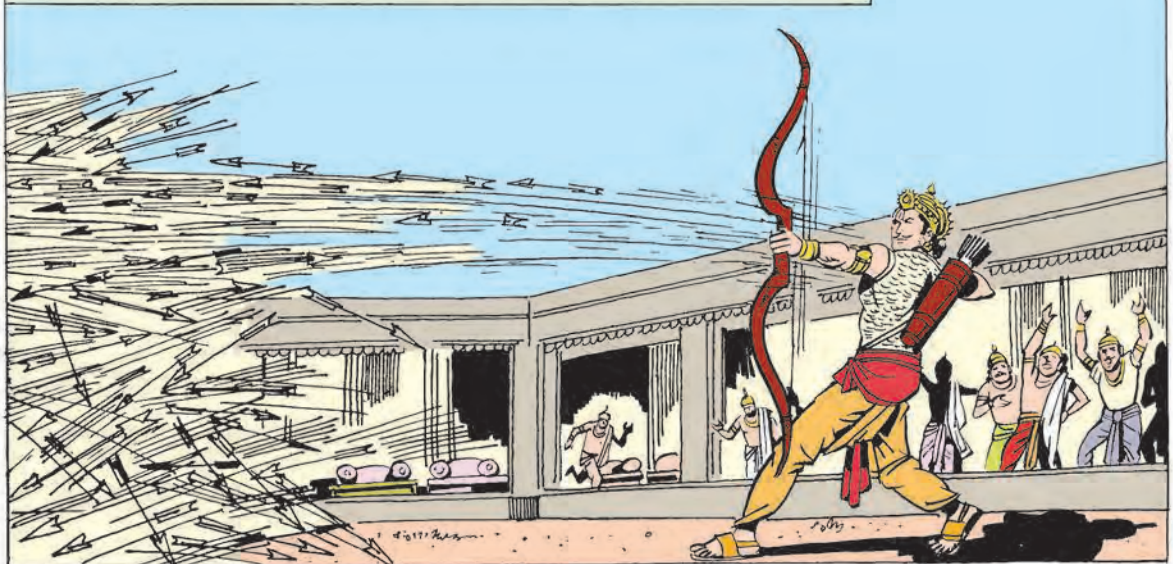
"...AND ATTACKED ARJUNA WITH RAGING FURY.
EACH ONE, O MONARCH, FOUGHT TO WIN."



"AS THEY EXCHANGED WORDS OF CHALLENGE ..."



"... KARNA BECAME AWARE OF THE MATCHLESS MIGHT OF ARJUNA
AND HE FOUGHT WITH ENHANCED VIGOUR. AND THE SKILL WITH
WHICH HE PARRIED ARJUNA'S SHOWER OF ARROWS ..."



"...AND THE ROAR HE LET OUT EARNED HIM THE RESPECT OF THE WARRIORS."



"THEN KARNA ADDRESSSED HIS RIVAL:"



ARE YOU THE EMBODIMENT OF THE SCIENCE OF ARCHERY? OR ARE YOU INDRA? OR VISHNU? PERHAPS YOU ARE ONE OF THE TWO IN THE GUISE OF A BRAHMANA?

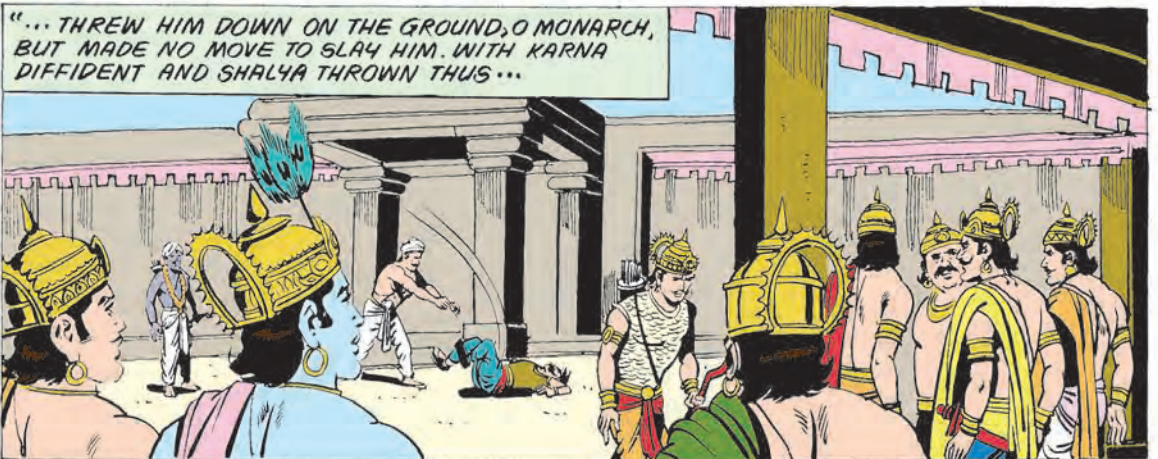
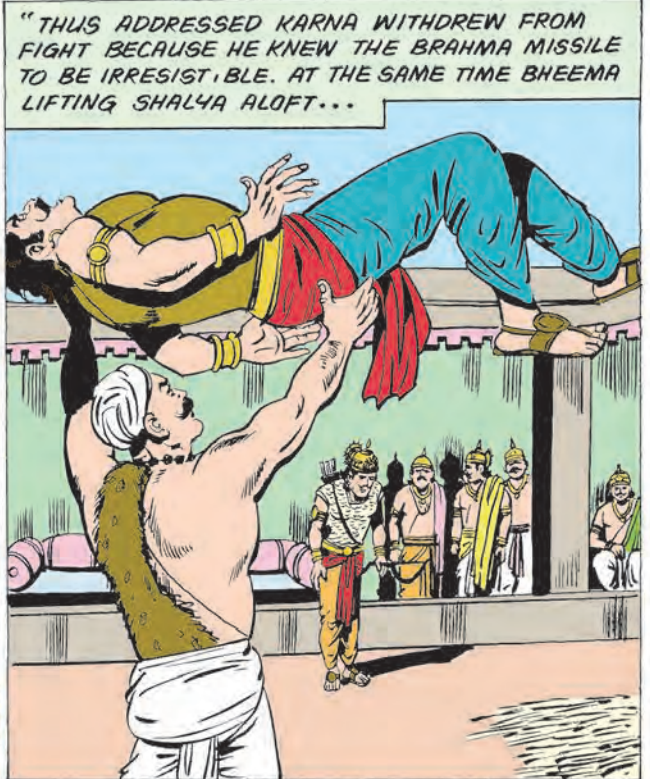


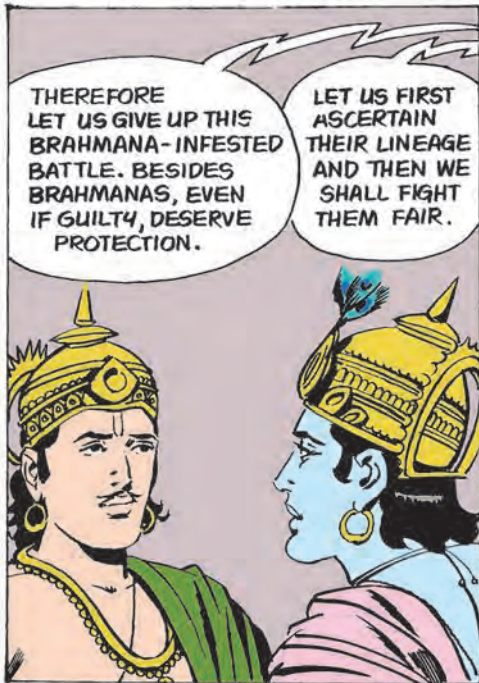
"ARJUNA REPLIED:"



I AM ONLY A BRAHMANA, A SUPREME WARRIOR.

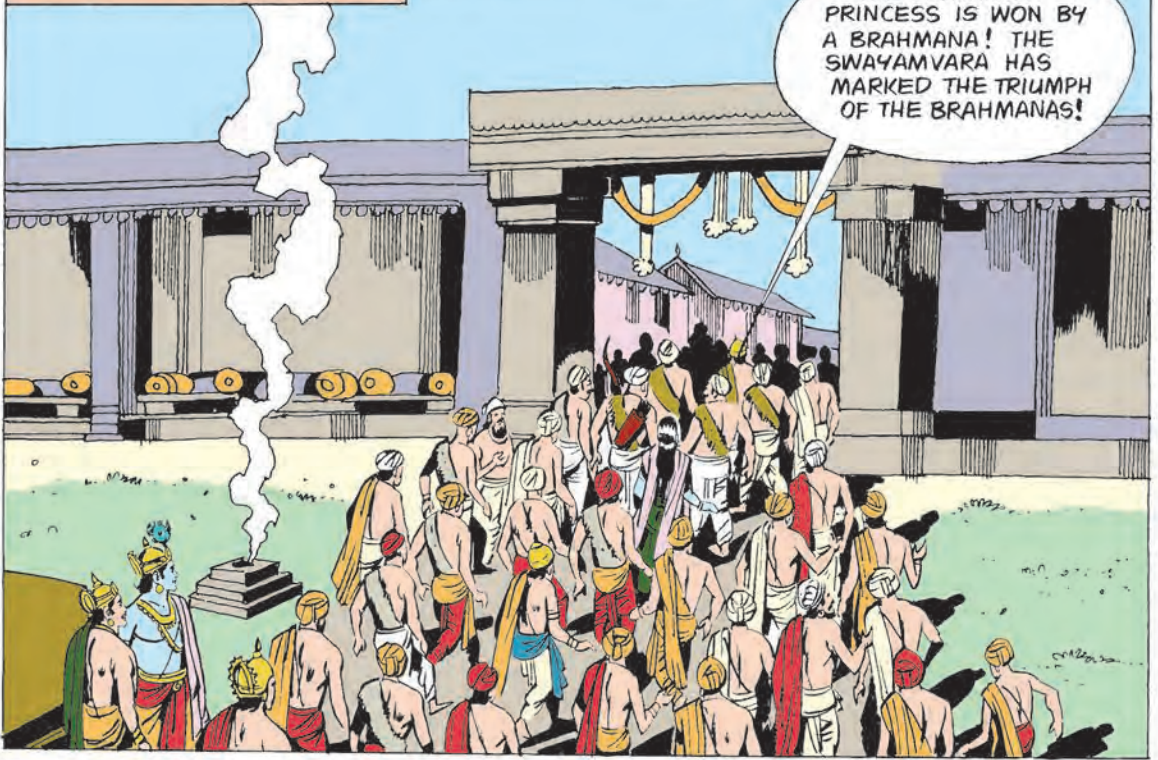






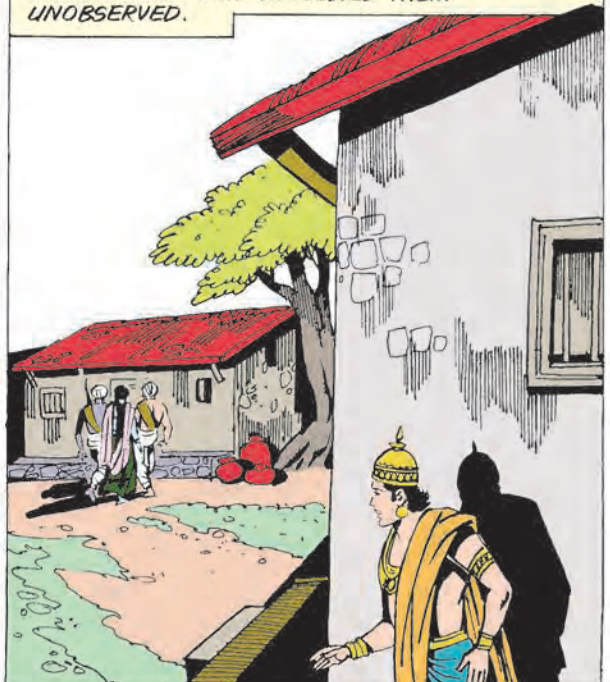
"BHEEMA AND ARIJUNA PUSHED THEIR WAY THROUGH THE CROWDING BRAHMANAS AND THOSE WHO HAD COME THERE WENT AWAY SAYING:

THE PANCHALA PRINCESS IS WON BY A BRAHMANA! THE SWAYAMVARA HAS MARKED THE TRIUMPH OF THE BRAHMANAS!

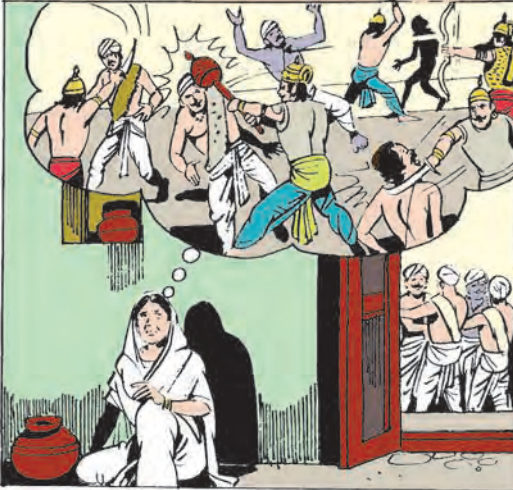


"AND THOSE BATTLE-SCARRED HEROES AT LAST EMERGED, FOLLOWED BY DRAUPADI, LIKE THE MOON AND THE SUN FROM AMONG THE CLOUDS.

"AS THEY WENDED THEIR WAY TO THE POTTER'S HOUSE IN THE LATE AFTERNOON, DHRISTADYUMNA FOLLOWED THEM UNOBSERVED.



"MEANWHILE KUNTI, WORRIED OVER THE DELAY IN THE RETURN OF HER SONS FROM THEIR ROUNDS, THOUGHT OF ALL THE ACCIDENTS THAT COULD HAVE BEFALLEN THEM. THE THOUGHT OF HER SONS BEING SLAIN BY THE SONS OF DHRTARASHTRA STRUCK HER.



"NEXT IT WAS THE THOUGHT OF A RAKSHASA GETTING AT HER SONS BY SORCERY.

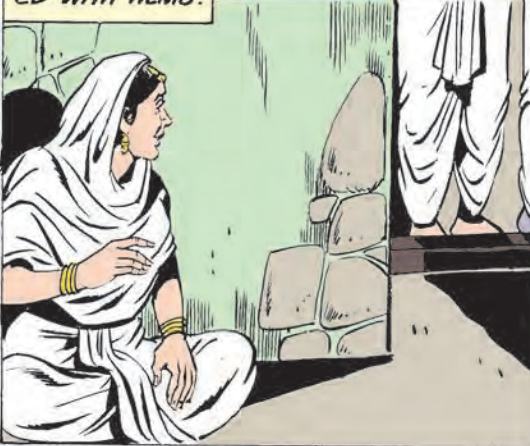


"AND SHE ASKED HERSELF:

COULD IT BE THAT THE GREAT VYASA HIMSELF HAS BEEN PROVED WRONG?



"AT THIS JUNCTURE THE SONS ENTERED AND ANNOUNCED THAT THEY HAD RETURNED WITH ALMS."



"KUNTI WHO WAS INSIDE AND COULD NOT SEE THEM ADVISED:"



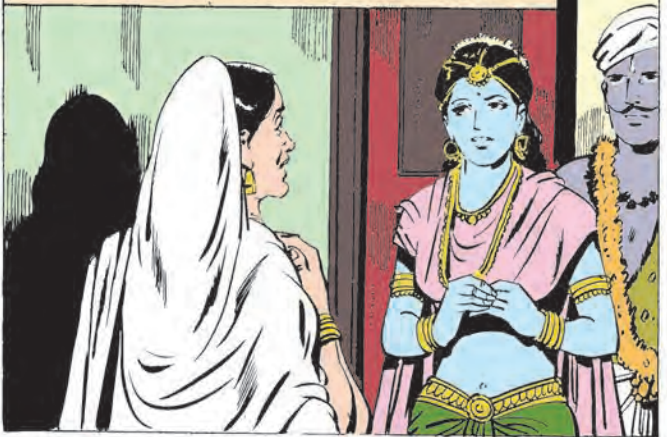
ENJOY IT,
ALL OF YOU
TOGETHER.

"AND THEN WHEN SHE SAW DRAUPADI SHE EXCLAIMED:"



OH! WHAT
HAVE I
SAID!

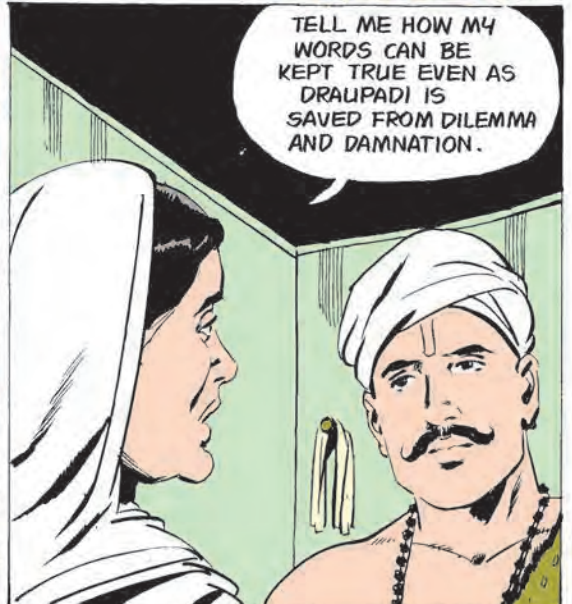
"FEARFUL OF TRANSGRESSING PROPRIETY..."



"...KUNTI ADDRESSING YUDHISHTHIRA SAID:"



YOUR BROTHERS
ANNOUNCED DRAUPADI
AS "THE ALMS" AND HEED-
LESSLY I SAID, ENJOY IT,
ALL OF YOU
TOGETHER.



TELL ME HOW MY
WORDS CAN BE
KEPT TRUE EVEN AS
DRAUPADI IS
SAVED FROM DILEMMA
AND DAMNATION.

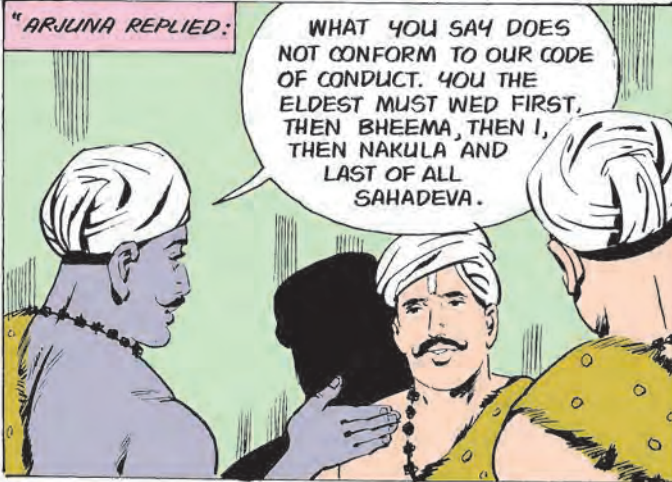
"THUS ADDRESSED BY HIS MOTHER, YUDHISHTHIRA REFLECTED FOR A WHILE AND THEN SAID TO ARJUNA :

DRAUPADI WAS WON BY YOU. THEREFORE LIGHT THE FIRE, TAKE HER HAND AND WED HER RIGHTFULLY.

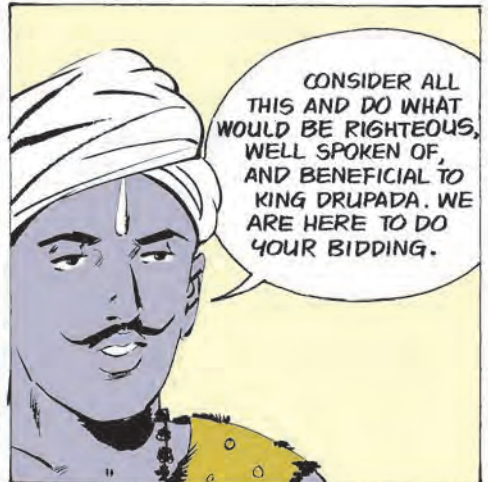


"ARJUNA REPLIED :

WHAT YOU SAY DOES NOT CONFORM TO OUR CODE OF CONDUCT. YOU THE ELDEST MUST WED FIRST, THEN BHEEMA, THEN I, THEN NAKULA AND LAST OF ALL SAHADEVA.



CONSIDER ALL THIS AND DO WHAT WOULD BE RIGHTEOUS, WELL SPOKEN OF, AND BENEFICIAL TO KING DRUPADA. WE ARE HERE TO DO YOUR BIDDING.



"HEARING THE WORDS OF ARJUNA SO FULL OF RESPECT AND AFFECTION AND ALSO BEHOLDING THE EYES OF HIS YOUNGER BROTHERS IMPLANTED IN THE RECIPROCATING GLANCES OF DRAUPADI...



"...YUDHISHTHIRA KNEW WHAT TROUBLED THEIR MINDS. THEN REMEMBERING MY GURU VYASA'S WORDS AND FEARFUL OF A SPLIT AMONG THE BROTHERS, HE SAID :

THE GRACIOUS DRAUPADI SHALL BE THE WIFE OF US ALL.



"AS THE HEROES JOYFULLY RUMINATED OVER THE WORDS OF THE ELDER BROTHER, KRISHNA AND BALARAMA CAME THERE.



"THEN KRISHNA, FOLLOWED BY BALARAMA, APPROACHED YUDHISHTHIRA AND BENT DOWN AND TOUCHED HIS FEET SAYING:



"THEN THOSE TWO YADAVA HEROES TOUCHED THE FEET OF KUNTI, THEIR FATHER'S SISTER.



"AFTER THE PANDAVAS HAD EXCHANGED PLEASANTRIES WITH KRISHNA, YUDHISHTHIRA ASKED HIM:

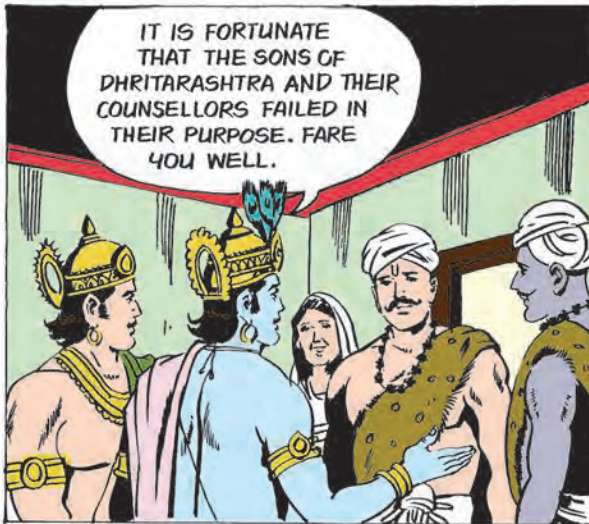
HOW DID YOU TRACE US HERE? WE HAVE BEEN LIVING IN SECRECY.



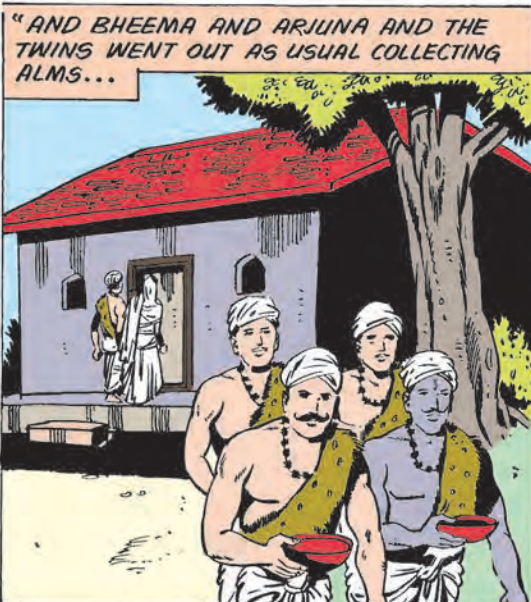
"KRISHNA REPLIED WITH A SMILE:

FIRE THOUGH SHROUDED WILL STILL SHOW. WHO AMONG MEN BUT THE PANDAVAS COULD SHOW SUCH MIGHT!





" THEN TAKING LEAVE OF YUDHISHTHIRA, KRISHNA AND BALARAMA HASTILY WITHDREW FROM THE SCENE.



"KUNTI ASKED DRAUPADI TO SET ASIDE A PORTION AS OFFERINGS TO THE GODS, TO BE GIVEN AWAY, AND TO DIVIDE THE REST INTO TWO HALVES.



"THEN SHE SAID:

GIVE ONE HALF TO BHEEMA BECAUSE HE ALWAYS CONSUMES MORE.



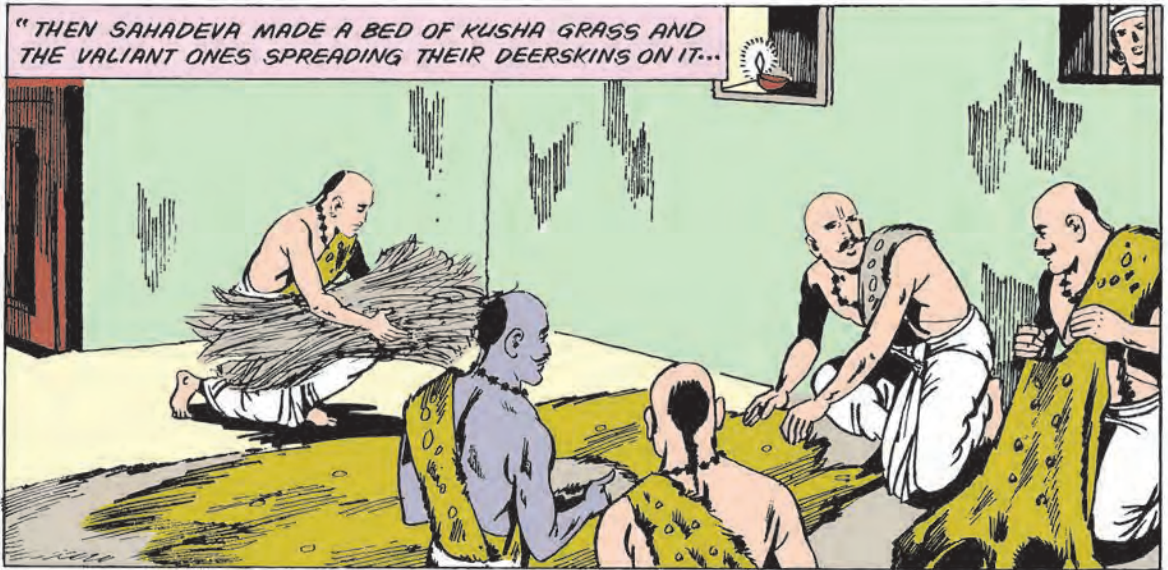
DIVIDE THE OTHER INTO SIX SHARES — FOUR FOR EACH OF THE BROTHERS, ONE FOR ME AND ONE FOR YOU.



"DRAUPADI OBEYED THE INSTRUCTIONS OF KUNTI AND ALL ATE THE FOOD.



"THEN SAHADEVA MADE A BED OF KUSHA GRASS AND THE VALIANT ONES SPREADING THEIR DEERSKINS ON IT..."



"...LAID THEMSELVES DOWN TO SLEEP WITH KUNTI AT THEIR HEADS AND DRAUPADI AT THEIR FEET."



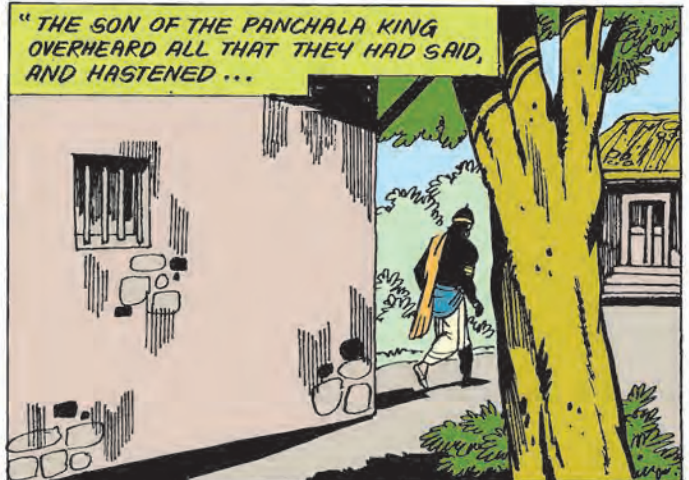
"THEN THESE BRAVE MEN STARTED TALKING AMONG THEMSELVES."



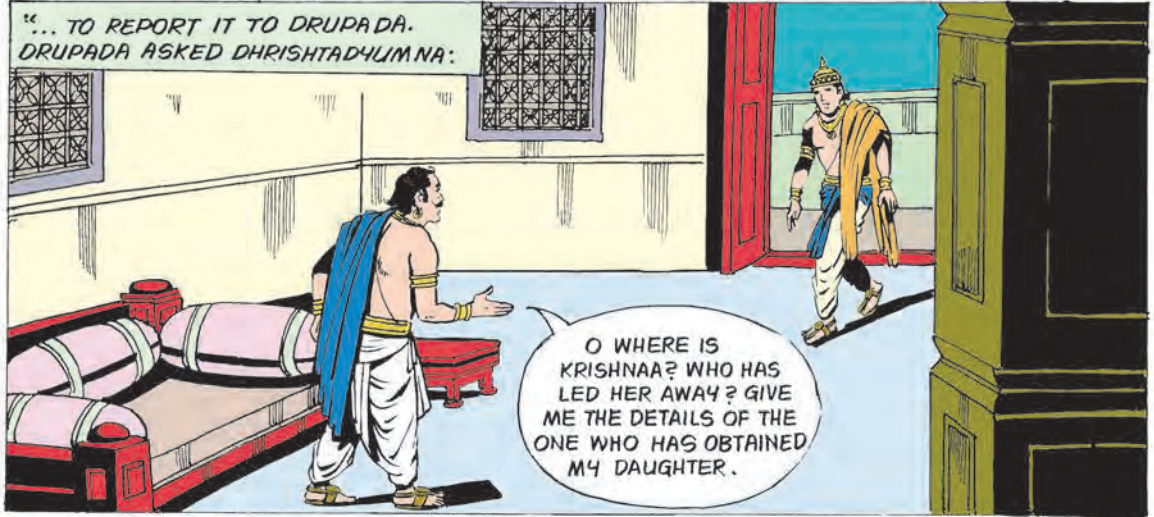
"AND THEY, IN THEIR MARTIAL AUTHORITY, TALKED OF SWORDS, MACES, BATTLE-AXES, ELEPHANTS, CHARIOTS AND CELESTIAL MISSILES."



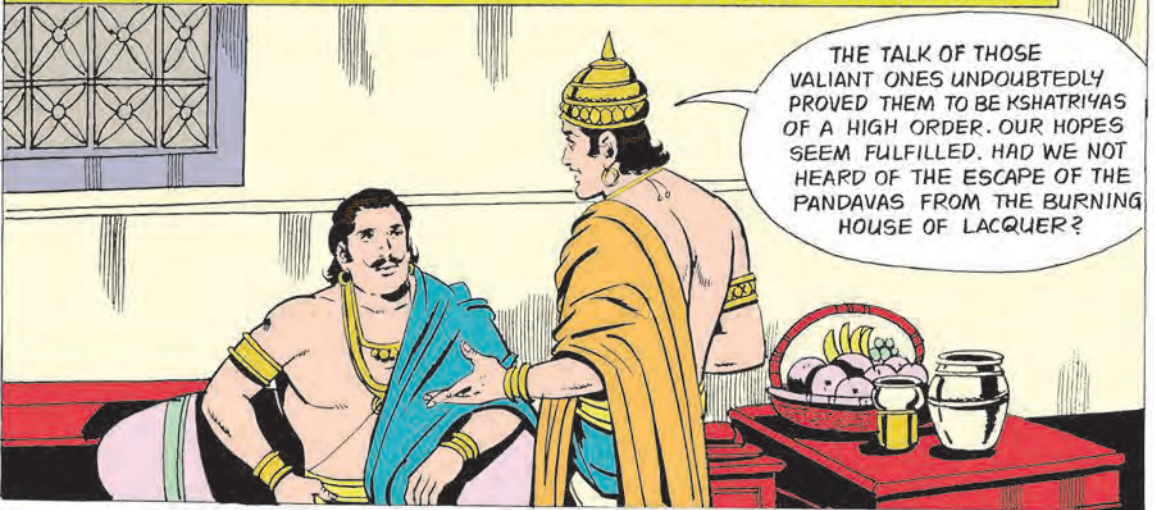
"THE SON OF THE PANCHALA KING OVERHEARD ALL THAT THEY HAD SAID, AND HASTENED ..."



"... TO REPORT IT TO DRUPADA.
DRUPADA ASKED DHRISTADYUMNA:



"AND DHRISTADYUMNA RECOUNTED ALL THAT HE HAD WITNESSED. THEN HE SAID:



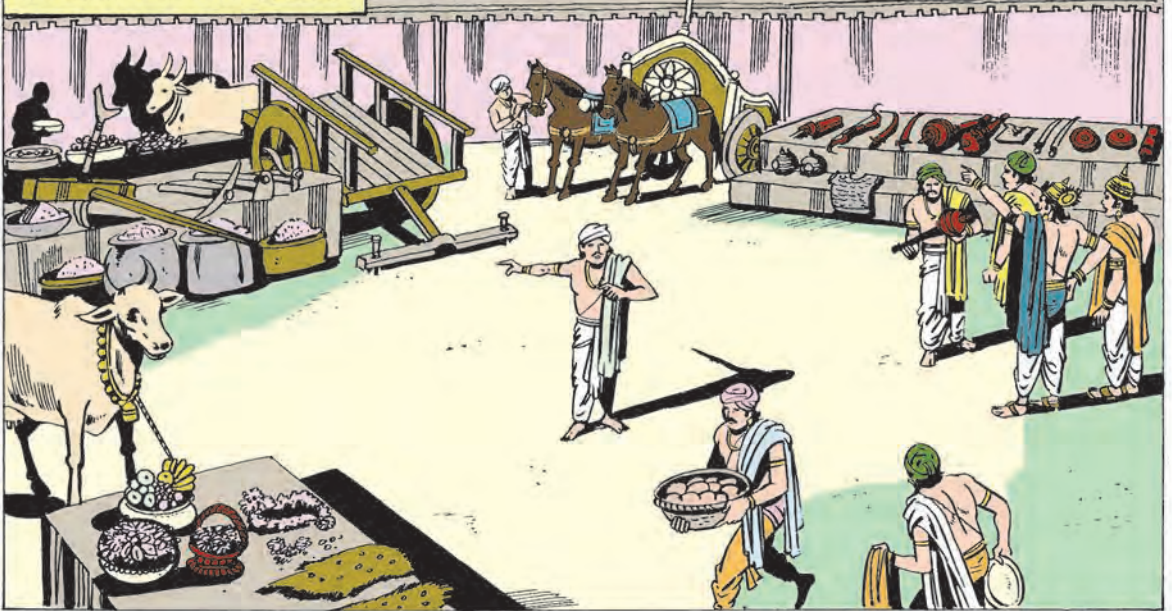
"DRUPADA EXCLAIMED:



"DHRISTADYUMNA REPLIED:



"THEN, KEEN ON TESTING THE IDENTITY OF THE VALIANT MEN, DRUPADA KEPT READY A LARGE COLLECTION OF FRUITS, GARLANDS, CARPETS; AND SEEDS, ROPES AND FARMING IMPLEMENTS; AND DIVERSE MARTIAL EQUIPMENT AND CHARIOTS AND STEEDS.

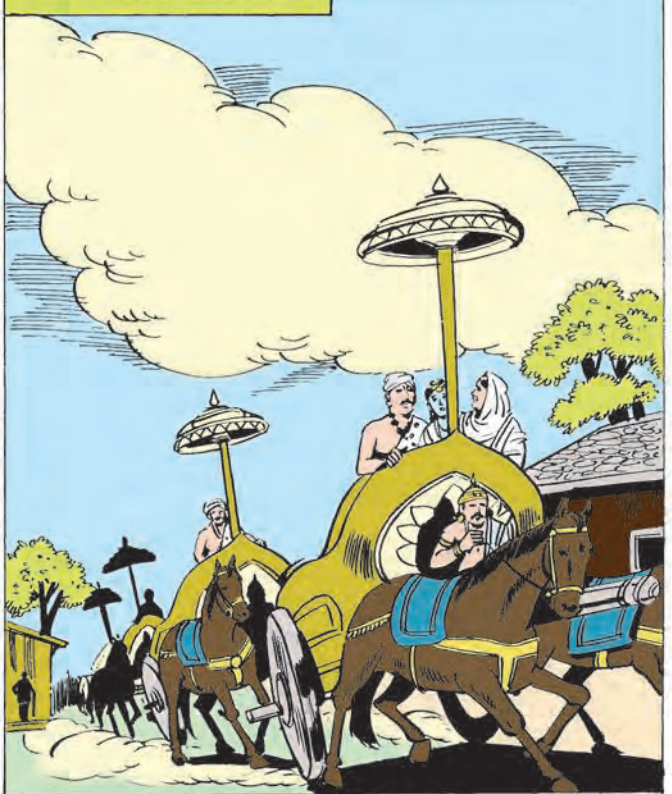


"AND A MESSENGER CAME TO YUDHISHTHIRA IN HASTE AND SAID:

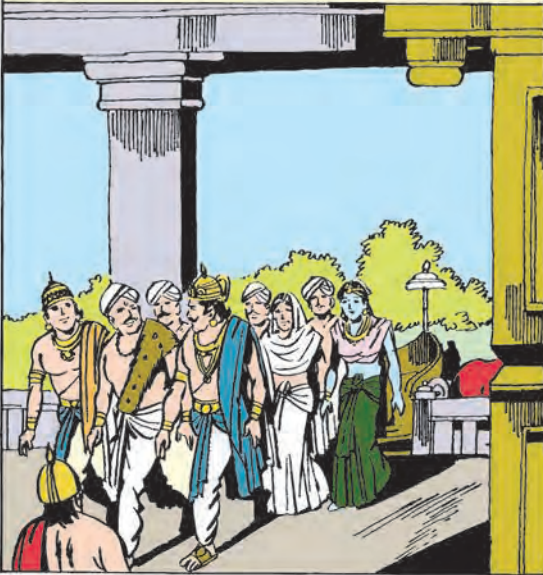
THE PANCHALA KING HAS PREPARED A FEAST FOR THE BRIDEGROOM AND HIS KINSFOLK. THESE ROYAL CHARIOTS WILL TAKE YOU TO THE KING'S RESIDENCE WHERE THE WEDDING WILL BE PERFORMED.



"THE PANDAVAS AND KUNTI AND DRAUPADI PROCEEDED TO DRUPADA'S PALACE IN THESE MAGNIFICENT CHARIOTS.



"BEHOLDING, O MONARCH, THOSE HEROES STRIDING IN, THEIR TORSOS CLAD IN DEER-SKIN, THE KING AND HIS SON AND THEIR RETINUE BECAME EXCEEDINGLY GLAD.



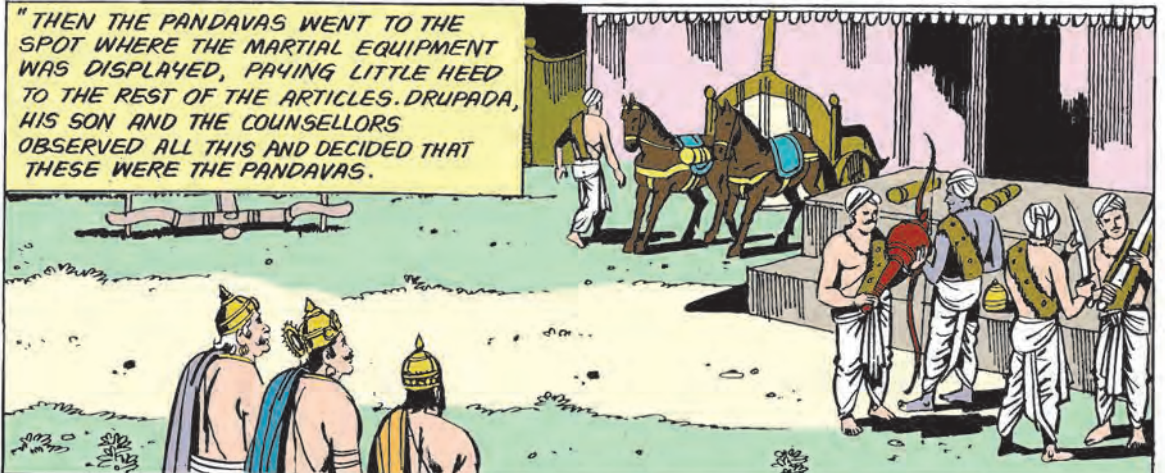
"THEN THOSE VALIANT ONES WENT UP TO THEIR SEATS AND OCCUPIED THEM WITHOUT DIFFIDENCE OR SURPRISE WHILE KUNTI AND DRAPADI WENT INTO THE INNER APPARTMENTS.



"AND WELL-DRESSED ATTENDANTS AND SERVANTS BROUGHT EXCELLENT FOOD IN PLATES OF GOLD AND SILVER WHICH THE HEROES ENJOYED TO THE FULL AND FELT PLEASED.

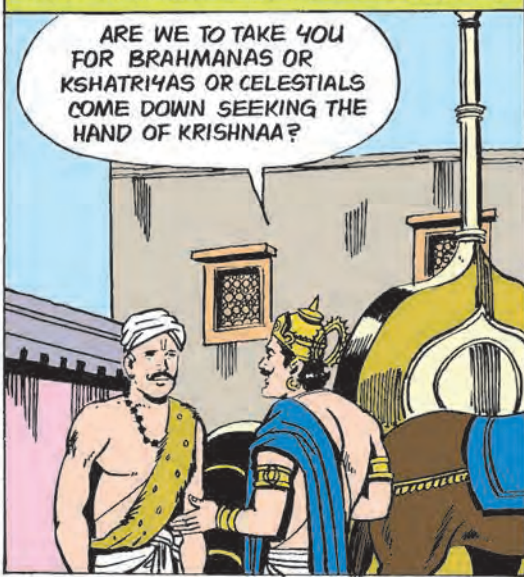


"THEN THE PANDAVAS WENT TO THE SPOT WHERE THE MARTIAL EQUIPMENT WAS DISPLAYED, PAYING LITTLE HEED TO THE REST OF THE ARTICLES. DRUPADA, HIS SON AND THE COUNSELLORS OBSERVED ALL THIS AND DECIDED THAT THESE WERE THE PANDAVAS.



"THEN DRUPADA SAID TO YUDHISHTHIRA:

ARE WE TO TAKE YOU
FOR BRAHMANAS OR
KSHATRIYAS OR CELESTIALS
COME DOWN SEEKING THE
HAND OF KRISHNAA?



IN KEEPING WITH YOUR
REPLY, I SHALL MAKE THE
REQUISITE PREPARATIONS
FOR MY DAUGHTER'S
WEDDING.



"YUDHISHTHIRA REPLIED:

WE ARE KSHATRIYAS AND
THE SONS OF PANDU.
I AM THE ELDEST OF
KUNTI'S SONS.



AND THOSE ARE
BHEEMA AND ARJUNA
WHO WON YOUR
DAUGHTER.

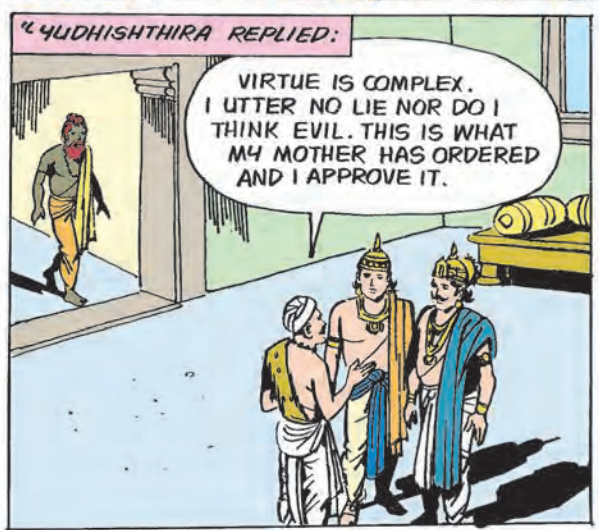
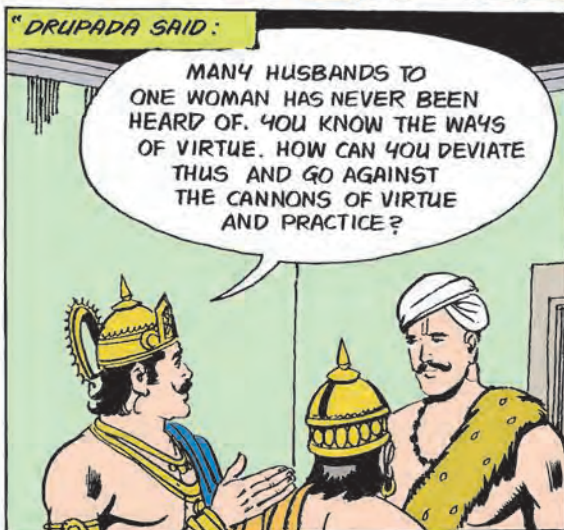
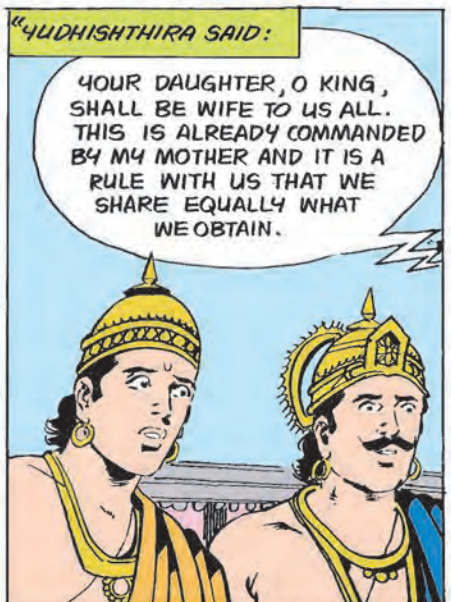
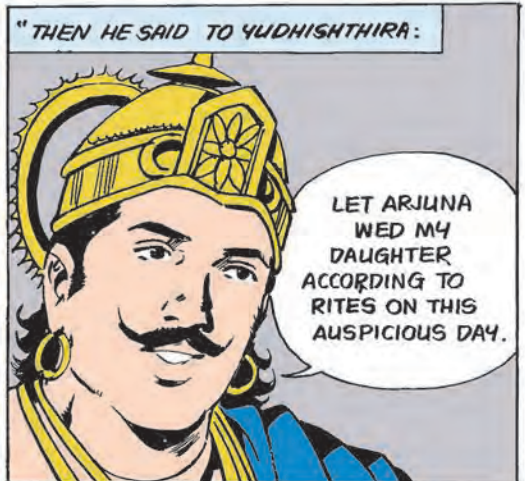
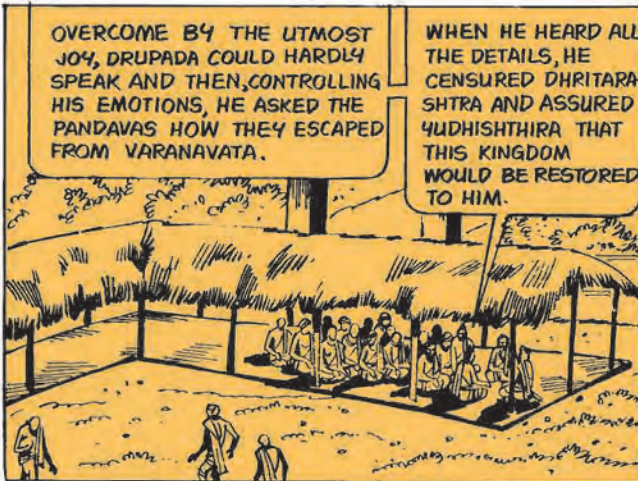


THESE ARE NAKULA
AND SAHADEVA. KUNTI
IS IN WITH
KRISHNAA.



I HAVE TOLD YOU
THE TRUTH. YOU ARE AN
ELDER TO US AND
OUR REFUGE.





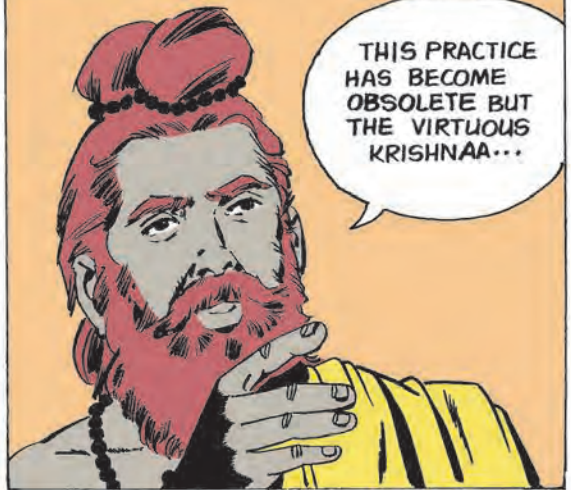
"JUST THEN MY GURU VYASA ARRIVED THERE AND, ACCEPTING THE RESPECTFUL SALUTATIONS OF ALL, SAT DOWN. THEN DRUPADA ASKED HIM :

O GREAT SAGE, HOW CAN ONE WOMAN BE THE VIRTUOUS WIFE OF MANY MEN WITHOUT BEING DEFILED?



"HE REPLIED :

THIS PRACTICE HAS BECOME OBSOLETE BUT THE VIRTUOUS KRISHNAA...



... HAS BEEN ORDAINED BY SHIVA TO BECOME THE WIFE OF FIVE HUSBANDS. NOW, YOU DO AS YOU WISH.



"THEN DRUPADA SAID :

WHEN IT IS THE WILL OF SHIVA—BE IT RIGHT OR WRONG—NO BLAME WILL COME TO ME.



AS DESTINED, LET THESE HEROES WED KRISHNAA ACCORDING TO THE RITES.

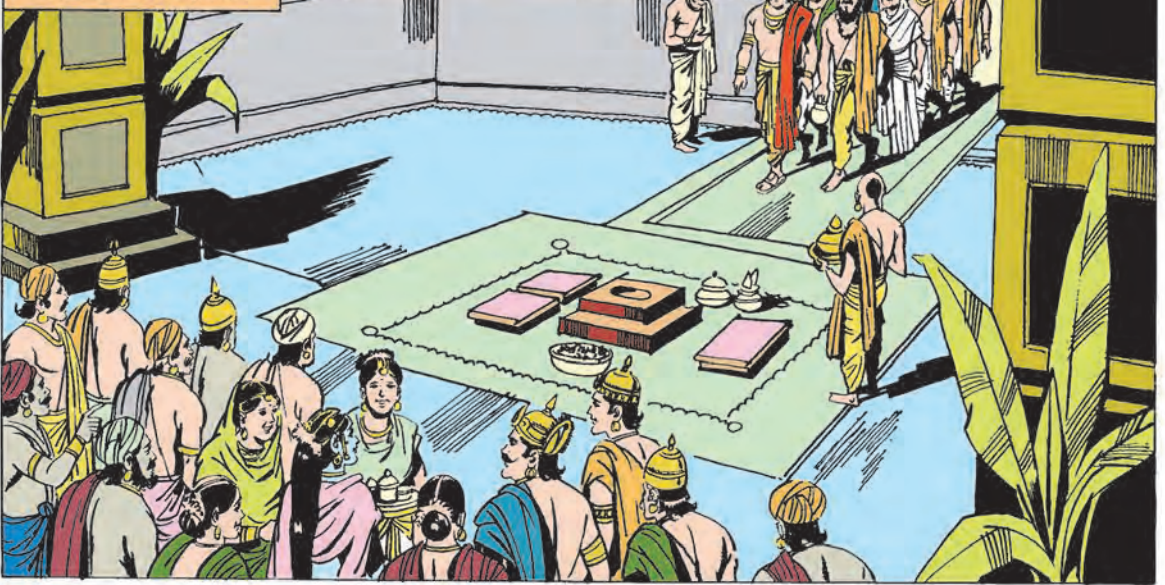


"THEN MY GURU SAID TO YUDHISHTHIRA :

O SON OF PANDU, ON THIS AUSPICIOUS DAY, YOU TAKE THE HAND OF KRISHNAA FIRST.



"WHEN VYASA SAID SO, DRUPADA MADE PREPARATIONS FOR THE WEDDING AND INVITED HIS RELATIVES, HIS COUNSELLORS, THE BRAHMANAS AND THE CITIZENS. THEN HE LED THE BEDECKED KRISHNAA INTO THE ASSEMBLY. THE PANDAVAS IN ALL THEIR FINERY CAME ACCOMPANIED BY THEIR PRIEST DHOUMYA.



"THEN DHOUMYA LIT AND SANCTIFIED THE SACRED FIRE WITH LIBATIONS AND MANTRAS AND YUDHISHTHIRA AND KRISHNAA CIRCUMAMBULATED THE FIRE.

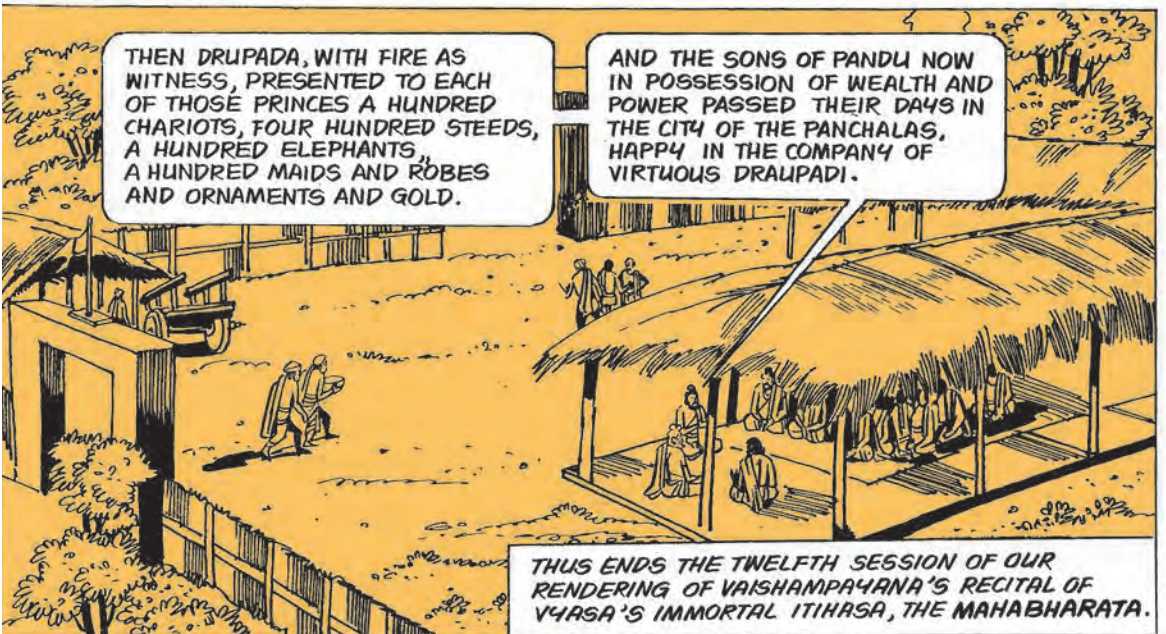


"WHEN THE WEDDING OF YUDHISHTHIRA AND DRAUPADI WAS PERFORMED, DHOLMYA LEFT THE PLACE AND RETURNED THE NEXT DAY TO PERFORM THE WEDDING OF THE SECOND PANDAVA. IN THIS MANNER THE FIVE PANDAVAS TOOK THE HAND OF DRAUPADI ON SUCCEEDING DAYS.



THEN DRUPADA, WITH FIRE AS WITNESS, PRESENTED TO EACH OF THOSE PRINCES A HUNDRED CHARIOTS, FOUR HUNDRED STEEDS, A HUNDRED ELEPHANTS, A HUNDRED MAIDS AND ROBES AND ORNAMENTS AND GOLD.

AND THE SONS OF PANDU NOW IN POSSESSION OF WEALTH AND POWER PASSED THEIR DAYS IN THE CITY OF THE PANCHALAS, HAPPY IN THE COMPANY OF VIRTUOUS DRAUPADI.



THUS ENDS THE TWELFTH SESSION OF OUR RENDERING OF VAISHAMPAYANA'S RECITAL OF VYASA'S IMMORTAL ITIHASA, THE MAHABHARATA.